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FROM THE CRUSADES TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

JEAN BRETAGNE, DUC DE LA TRÉMOILLE, MARIE DE SALM, DUCHESSE DE LA TRÉMOILLE AND THEIR SONS

Louis de La Trémoille

Le Prince de Tarente Le Prince de Talmond
Le Prince Abbé de La Trémoille

FROM THE CRUSADES TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

A HISTORY OF THE LA TRÉMOILLE FAMILY

BY

WINIFRED STEPHENS

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PREFACE

WITHOUT exaggeration it may be said that in the history of France few families, if any, have played a more persistently prominent part than the house of La Trémoille.[1] For five centuries, from the Crusades to the Revolution, the La Trémoille stock has never failed to produce men of mark, and women too. Whether for good or for evil La Trémoilles have stamped their personalities on those great movements which have built up modern France: on the Crusades, on the Hundred Years War, on the Italian campaigns, on the religious strife which followed the Reformation, on the Fronde, and, during the Revolution, on the death struggle of that *ancien régime* with which they had been so intimately associated.

Outside France, too, in the affairs of England and of Denmark, and in such great European movements as the struggle for independence of the United Provinces and the establishment of the Bourbons on the throne of Spain, we shall find La Trémoilles active. We shall also find them figuring in association with such famous persons as Joan of Arc, Prince Rupert, Oliver Cromwell, Madame de Sévigné, Prince Charles Edward, and Marie Antoinette.

To tell adequately the story of this illustrious house it would be necessary, therefore, to write not only the history of France through five centuries, but more than

[1] This name, which in Latin was Tremulia, in French is to be found spelt in four different ways: Trimoille, Trémoïlle, Trimouille and Trémoille. The last is the form here adopted.

one chapter in the history of other states. Such an undertaking the limits of the present volume forbid. My readers must brook abridgment.

The persistent dominance of the La Trémoille line the modern eugenist will ascribe to the care of its members always to choose their consorts from the most vigorous families of the day—Montmorency, Nassau, Arragon, Stanley, Condé, Hesse Cassel, Sobieski—to mention only a few of the influential houses to which they were allied. But the La Trémoilles have not always been equally powerful. Their wealth and influence attained its zenith towards the end of the sixteenth century, during the lifetime of Claude, the second Duke. Then with their 1,700 vassals, a larger number than were included in any other French fief, the heads of this house were nothing more or less than kinglets of western France. At Laval and at Thouars, their Breton and Poitevin capitals, they kept truly royal state. On the banks of the little river Thouet they raised a princely pile [1] which cast into insignificance such royal residences as Marly and Chenonceaux. Had any La Trémoille a grievance against the Crown, which not infrequently happened, in a very short time he could equip and put into the field an army of several hundred men.

But, towards the middle of the following century, the tide of their success changed and their fortunes began to ebb. In the civil war of the Fronde, that last great struggle of the French nobility against the centralised government of Richelieu and Mazarin, a government intended to thwart the aspirations of the nobles and to degrade kinglets into courtiers, La Trémoille wealth, freely expended on the side of the nobility, dwindled, estates grew encumbered and their owners burdened with debt.

[1] Still standing to-day and used as a prison. See illustration.

Henceforth the Dukes of La Trémoille found it impossible to keep up the double state of a hotel in Paris and a court in the west. They were now compelled to choose between the prestige of a great feudal lord in the provinces and the glamour of a grandee at court; they elected the latter, and they began to reside more and more at Paris. Poitevins and Bretons came to know them no more. Thus, on the La Trémoille estates, as throughout the rest of France, there grew up that disastrous system of absenteeism, which caused the feudal yoke so to chafe the necks of its wearers that ultimately, with one great throb of agony, they cast it off.

As long as the Dukes of La Trémoille lived amongst their vassals, taking a personal interest in their concerns, feudal burdens, though heavy, were bearable. At the bidding of the Duke and Duchess living in their midst the people of Thouars had been content to slave, to give their labour, as well as their money, for the building of that huge castle which still dominates their town. But when their princes left them to return only at rare intervals, and then without ceremony or even incognito, when they ceased to hold in those lordly halls the annual gatherings of their numerous vassals, when the courts of Thouars ceased to resound beneath the armed feet of goodly companies assembling to be led to battle by their chief, when *corvées* had to be rendered and feudal dues paid to an absent and unknown lord, then the gorges of sturdy Bretons and Poitevins rose against the injustice of the *ancien régime;* Thouars became one of the first provincial cities to set up a Jacobite club, and soon the broad lands of the La Trémoilles were seized by the Government of the Revolution.

But it is important to remark that when the state took

possession of the La Trémoille property, and the Jacobins of Thouars could range at will through the lofty halls of the castle on the Thouet, it was only on the property of the Duke of that day that they wreaked their vengeance. The portraits of his ancestors, with one exception,[1] they venerated and even carried off to their own homes in order to save them from desecration by strangers.

While *Sans-Culottes* were profaning the homes of his ancestors, the Duc de La Trémoille, Charles Bretagne, was reduced to wandering over the face of Europe serving in foreign armies against his republican countrymen. His eldest brother, leading the forlorn hope of the *ancien régime* in La Vendée, was taken, and by a Republican court martial condemned to die beneath the walls of his own castle of Laval. A few months later another brother was guillotined at Paris.

After the Revolution turmoil had subsided, the late Duke, Louis Charles de La Trémoille, devoted many years to making known the history of his illustrious family. And it is chiefly from the La Trémoille archives as published by Duke Louis that the story told in this book has been derived.

The history of these archives is in itself a romance. When in the seventeenth century Marie de la Tour d'Auvergne and her husband, Duke Henry de La Trémoille, built their great château on the Thouet, they constructed in one of its towers a strong room with a heavy iron door, and here they placed the family records which had accumulated through the ages. In the previous generation at Duke Claude's request these documents had been classified and arranged by two eminent archivists of the day, the brothers Scévole and Louis de Sainte-Marthe.

[1] That of Marie de la Tour d'Auvergne. See *post*, 200.

THE CHÂTFAU OF THOUARS IN ITS PRESENT CONDITION

These historians composed a summary of their researches, which, after their death, was published by their son and nephew, Pierre Scévole de Sainte-Marthe. This,[1] the earliest known history of the La Trémoilles, appeared in 1668.

For a century and more the La Trémoille archives rested in peace in the muniment room of Thouars. Then the Revolution broke out and the Poitevin town became one of the centres of the war waged in the west by the courageous supporters of monarchy. More than once the chateau had to stand a siege, and more than once it narrowly escaped being burnt to the ground. But through all these dangers, though riddled with bullets, the iron door kept out the besiegers and the archives remained intact.

The time came, however, when the La Trémoilles, having emigrated, their chateau, as we have said, was seized by the Revolution Government. Then the muniment room became public property. Then the battered iron door was left to swing on its hinges, the chests were rifled and their contents exposed to the ravages of autograph hunters, of rats and of damp, while the finest pieces of parchment the good wives of Thouars eagerly appropriated to serve as covers for their jam pots. So, when Revolution wrath had subsided and Duke Charles asked Napoleon's Government to restore his family records, the steward sent down to Thouars to examine them, found the contents of two chests, such as remained of them, strewn like so many scraps of waste paper on the floor of the muniment room. But the papers in the four remaining chests appear to have been untouched, and they contained enough material for the composition of a connected

[1] " Histoire Généalogique de la Maison de Trémoille."

family history. Some twenty years later, when in 1830 Duke Charles took for his third wife the Comtesse de Serrant, these documents, securely packed in eighty cases, were removed to the chateau of Serrant, where most of them remain to this day.

Nevertheless, the true value of these records was not rightly estimated until the middle of the last century, when M. Paul Marchegay, archivist, of Maine-et-Loire, in search of letters from Madame de Sévigné to a La Trémoille princess,[1] obtained permission to examine them. Of the letters he sought not one did M. Marchegay discover,[2] but he found others equally interesting, written by Louise de Coligny, sister of the famous Admiral and third wife of William the Silent, to her step-daughter, Charlotte Brabantine, who had married Duke Claude de La Trémoille. These, with other valuable letters of the same period, M. Marchegay published in three volumes.[3]

Following in M. Marchegay's footsteps and with his assistance Duke Louis de La Trémoille undertook for publication a systematic arrangement of the family archives. In 1877, there appeared for private circulation a fine folio, the " Chartier de Thouars," a copy of which the Duke presented to the British Museum. Then between 1890 and 1896 he gave to the public five handsome volumes entitled " Les La Trémoille pendant cinq siècles."

From these and other minor publications it will be seen

[1] See *post*, 203 *et seq.*

[2] They were found elsewhere and inserted by M. Monmerqué in his edition of Madame de Sévigné's letters.

[3] " Lettres de Louise de Coligny . . . à . . . Charlotte Brabantine de Nassau, Duchesse de La Trémoille," 1872 ; " Lettres d'Elisabeth de Nassau, Duchesse de Bouillon, à sa sœur Charlotte Brabantine de Nassau, Duchesse de La Trémoille," 1875 ; " Correspondance de Louise de Coligny recueillie par P. Marchegay," 1887. See also by the same author, " Recherches historiques sur le département de La Vendée," 1859, and " Cartulaires du Bas-Poitou," 1877.

that, despite many serious losses, there remained of the La Trémoille documents an invaluable collection including letters from kings and princes, correspondence between other great historical personages and, by no means the least interesting to English readers, the letters of that famous Charlotte de La Trémoille, Countess of Derby, that Lady of Lathom whom Sir Walter Scott has so admirably depicted in " Peveril of the Peak."

For four centuries at least, from Froissart downwards, French chronicles, memoirs and histories abound in references to the members of this house.

The earliest biography of a La Trémoille was written in the sixteenth century by Jean Bouchet, a Poitiers lawyer, and a retainer of the great Count Louis de La Trémoille.[1] In terms of extravagant adulation Bouchet tells the story of his master's adventurous career and of the Italian wars in which he commanded the armies of three successive French Kings.

The most recent biography of a La Trémoille is a volume by Edouard Barthélemy, telling the tragic story of Charlotte de La Trémoille, Princesse de Condé, who was accused of poisoning her husband. Of that other and later Charlotte, the Lady of Lathom, there are two excellent biographies, one in English by Guizot's daughter, Madame de Witt, and another more recent, in French, by Léon Marlet.[2] No less than four members of the family have written their own memoirs. The letters of several others have been published. For example, the correspondence of his illustrious kinswoman, the Princesse des Ursins, on the question of the Spanish succession, the Duc

[1] This life is included in Michaud and Poujoulat's collection of French memoirs, Series I., Vol. IV.

[2] A third, by Miss Rowsell, contains nothing which is not to be found in Madame de Witt's book save several inaccuracies.

de La Trémoille has published in no less than six magnificent quarto volumes. All these sources I have conscientiously consulted, and detailed references to them will be found in the following pages.

It now only remains for me to express my thanks to those who by their kindness have facilitated the illustration of this book: to Madame la Duchesse Douairière de La Trémoille for her gracious permission to reproduce pictures and portraits contained in the publications of the late Duc de La Trémoille; to Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond, herself a descendant of a Princesse de La Trémoille, for generously placing her portrait album at my disposal; to Count Bentinck and Mr. Aldenburg Bentinck for their permission to reproduce portraits in their possession; to Miss Evelyn Glover, for an excellent photograph of the Castle at Vitré; and to Miss Dorothy McDougall for supplying me with an interesting collection of pictures of Poitou.

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FROM THE CRUSADES TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

LA TRÉMOILLES IN THE CRUSADES AND THE ENGLISH WARS. 1040—1397

THERE is nothing to especially distinguish the small market town of La Trémoille, in Poitou, from hundreds of other agricultural centres scattered here and there throughout the length and breadth of France. The little river Benaize, on which La Trémoille stands, is spanned by the usual solid stone bridge. From the bridge end there rambles up aimlessly into the country-side the usual *Grand' Rue,* with its side paths of irregular paving stones and its rough cast, slate-roofed houses, many with shop fronts, and generally of two stories, broken occasionally by a low gable end or the addition of a third floor.

This is the little town which gave its name to, or received its name from, the La Trémoilles, of whom one, Pierre de La Trémoille, living in 1040, is the earliest known representative. But in days yet more remote, a lordship of La Trémoille formed part of the domain of the Counts of Poitou, and eventually became a separate fief held by younger members of the Count's family.

Of these early Sieurs de La Trémoille, little is known, save that from the days of Pierre onwards, they grew in wealth, dignity, and dominions. Later from simple lords or seigneurs they rose to be counts, then dukes,

then princes, always, as we have said, allying themselves with great houses, notably in the sixteenth century with that of Arragon, through which they assumed the title of Princes of Taranto, and claimed a right to the crown of Naples, enjoying at the French court for nearly 100 years privileges only accorded to foreign princes.

Down through all the ages of the family history the La Trémoille women have ever occupied a position of unusual honour. While the descent of the French Monarchy was subject to the restrictions of the Salic Law, not so the Duchy of La Trémoille, which, in the event of the failure of male heirs,[1] was held capable of descending through the female line. La Trémoille princesses, in the seventeenth century, attained to the highest of court honours, that of "having the *tabouret*," as it was called, which meant that from the tender age of seven a princess of this house might in her sovereign's presence remain proudly seated on a folding chair without arms or back, called a *Tabouret*.

Of the earliest La Trémoilles we know the bare fact that they took part in the Crusades; that Guy I. accompanied Godefroi de Bouillon to the Holy Land in 1096; that Guy's son, Guillaume II., went with Louis VII. on the second Crusade, in 1147; and that Thibaud or Imbaud, with his three sons, in 1248, followed St. Louis on his disastrous African expedition. But of Thibaud we know also that in the narrow streets of an African town, Mansourah, whither the vanguard of the Crusaders had been led by the rash zeal of the Comte d'Artois, the King's brother, he and his sons, with the flower of French chivalry, assailed by the Saracens with "arrows and pieces of wood," fell fighting gloriously.

[1] This event has never yet occurred.

Not, however, before the thirteenth century is it possible to piece together anything like a connected history of this house. And the first La Trémoille of whom we possess any detailed knowledge is Guy VI. whose parents were Guy V., *Grand Panetier*[1] of France in 1353, and Radegonde Guénaud.[2]

Born about the middle of the fourteenth century, Guy VI., on his father's death, entered into vast possessions, broad lands in such different parts of the kingdom as Poitou, Berry, Bourbonnais, Burgundy, Limousin, Orléannais, Savoy and l'Ile-de-France. This extensive domain was further augmented by his marriage with Marie de Sully, one of the wealthiest heiresses of her day. It was Marie who brought her husband that great castle of Sully on the Loire, not far from Orléans, one of the most princely of La Trémoille residences. Despite the renovations and additions of four centuries, in its great central wing it still perpetuates the memory of the opulent Madame Marie.

When still young, Sieur Guy, was already renowned as *un brilliant chevalier*. It was in that desultory warfare by which, after Creçy and Poitiers, the English gradually lost the conquests they had won that Guy de La Trémoille won his spurs. In 1382, in the Cathedral of St. Denis, from the hands of his sovereign, Charles VI., Guy received the glorious oriflamme of Clovis and of Charlemagne, the sacred standard of France, woven of costly silk, called sandal, and edged about with tassels of green, which he bore gallantly before his king into battle with the English. Two years later Guy was appointed

[1] Master of the King's pantry.
[2] For Guy's other children, see Anselme, "Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique," IV., 181.

one of the ambassadors to cross the Channel and treat of peace with England. There so deeply did he impress the English as a gallant knight, that two years later still, Sir Peter Courtenay journeyed into France with no object but to break a lance with this expert warrior.

Together Guy and his adversary tilted before the King and his court, while the Duchess of Burgundy, wife of the great Philip the Bold, commanded prayers to be offered for the success of the French champion. But King Charles, hesitating to take sides, and equally dreading the mischance of either combatant, of his good vassal, or of his trustful guest, after a few bouts ordered the lists to be closed before either knight had won any vantage.

At such treatment we are not surprised to find Sir Peter bitterly incensed. Only with rich gifts and fair words was his anger appeased; but even these did not entirely content him, for on the way home he complained bitterly of the French King's action. The numerous heralds, who had accompanied the knight from England, were perhaps better pleased, for they had received between them from the King's uncle, the Duke of Burgundy, no less a sum than 150 francs, which is more than ten times as much in modern money. Meanwhile, the great Duke Philip testified his appreciation of the valour and prowess of his *cher et féal cousin*, as he called La Trémoille, by appointing him his executor, and directing that on his death he should be interred at the Duke's feet in the Carthusian monastery of Champnol-lès-Dijon. Here we note the earliest evidence of that close connection between the La Trémoilles and the Dukes of Burgundy, which was to endure for more than a century.[1]

[1] Some writers describe the La Trémoilles as of Burgundian origin. It is certain that from very early times they held lands in Burgundy.

Closely associated with his suzerain, Duke Philip, was Guy de La Trémoille in that monster expedition against England, which was one of the greatest wonders and the most disastrous failures of the age. For like Napoleon's expedition, this vast host, having assembled through many months on the coast of Flanders, never even succeeded in crossing the Channel.

"The biggest fleet that had ever been seen since the creation of the world," 1,400 ships, hired or purchased from well nigh every maritime power in Europe, Duke Philip, during the summer of 1386, assembled in Flemish harbours. Meanwhile to the camp at Arras there flocked the flower of French chivalry, hundreds of knights, who lavished on their accoutrement untold sums, for which they looked to recoup themselves by booty captured in England. Covered with silken tents from which floated all the pomp of heraldry—lions, dragons, and unicorns, destined to defy the leopards of England—the camp at Arras in its magnificence anticipated the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Accompanying the knights was a vast host, mustering no less than 8,000 men-at-arms and 60,000 foot-soldiers ; while for the feeding of this great multitude there was gathered from every part of France vast store of victuals—hay, oats, wine, sacks of flour, barrels of salt and of onions, and casks filled with yolks of eggs.

But the crowning glory of Duke Philip's preparations was a complete wooden town with houses, towers and palisades, constructed in Breton forests, and intended to be set up on British shores, where it was to form a kind of moveable Calais for the shelter of French troops. No less than seventy-two vessels were sent to convey this marvellous triumph of mediæval engineering to Flanders.

But now mischance began to overtake Duke Philip's scheme. Between Flanders and Brittany, tempests beat upon the wooden town, and shattered it to pieces. Meanwhile the host at Arras was awaiting the coming of the King who was to command it. But quarrels at court and jealousy of Duke Philip were delaying the King's departure, and the summer months were fleeting by. When at length he arrived at Arras, the most favourable time for crossing had passed, autumn had set in, the ruined knights had begun to return to their mortgaged demesnes, the vast host was dwindling; then the equinoctial gales began, the sea guarded Great Britain.

"And Ocean 'mid his uproar wild
Spoke safety to his island-child."[1]

Thus vanished Guy de La Trémoille's first and only opportunity of displaying his warlike prowess on English soil.

Then for a while there was peace between France and England. So now warriors on both sides the Channel might together turn their arms against the Infidel. In 1389, as in St. Louis' day, it was against the African Miscreant that the Crusade was directed. Guy de La Trémoille, with his brother Guillaume, and his brother-in-law Sully, was not loath, we may be sure, to follow the Duc de Bourbon, another of the King's uncles, who led the French Crusaders.

In some of his most picturesque passages, Froissart has described the voyage of these "Christen men" to what he calls "the town of Afryke," the modern Almalia, very near the site of ancient Carthage.

"The trumpets blew up at their departing," writes

[1] Coleridge, "Ode on the Departing Year," quoted by Michelet, "Hist. de France," Bk. VII., Chap. II.

the historian,[1] "and it was great pleasure to behold how they rowed abroad in the sea, which was peaceable, calm and fair, showing herself desirous that the Christen men should come before the strong town of Afryke. The Christen navy was goodly to regard, and well ordered; and it was great beauty to see the banners and penons of silk, with the arms and badges of the lordes and other, waving with the wind, and shining against the sun. Coming to the haven of Afryke, the Christen men lodged all night there. The next morning the weather was fair and clear, and the air in good temper, and the sun rose, that it was pleasure to behold. Then the Christen men began to stir and to make ready to take land. Then trumpets and clarions began to sound in the galleys and vessels, and made great noise. And about nine of the clock, when the Christen men had taken a little refreshing with drink, then were they rejoiced and lighted. And, according as they had appointed before, they sent in first their light vessels called brigandyns, well furnished with artillery; they entered into the haven, and after them came the galleys and the other ships of the fleet in good order.

"And, turning towards the land by the sea side, there was a strong castle with high towers, and especially one Tower which defended the sea side and the land also; and in this Tower was a bricoll or an engine which was not idle, but still did cast great stones among the Christen men's ships. And likewise in every tower of the town on the sea-side, there were engines to cast stones."

Despite these stones which assailed them, the "Christen men" appear to have received no great hurt in landing. And without further let or hindrance from the Saracens, they pitched their tents upon the shore, Guillaume de La Trémoille's on the right of the Duke's from which floated, his banner covered with flowers de luce, with Our Lady

[1] Lord Berner's Trans., ed. 1812, II., 499.

in the midst and the arms of Bourbon at her feet. Next to Guillaume's tent came the Comte de Sully's, and then Sire Guy's.

From the walls of Afryke "the false Saracens" had watched the "Christen men" disembarking, and had marvelled to see them approach the shore in little boats. But, save for the throwing of stones, the Infidel made no attempt to prevent their landing.

Soon, however, tidings of the enemy's descent upon their coasts were bruited abroad in the country round about Afryke; and a great Saracen army came and encamped over against the "Christen men" on the sea-shore.

Then there began what was little more than a long drawn out tournament. On the second day in the morning, the Saracens came to skirmish with the "Christen men;" and the skirmishing endured the space of two hours. The Saracens would not fight hand to hand, but they fought with casting of darts and shooting, and would not foolishly adventure themselves, but wisely and sagely "reculed."

Among the Saracens was one knight who especially distinguished himself. His name was Agadingor Dolyferne (*sic*), and his father was the Duke of Olyferne. Agadingor was always well mounted on a light and ready horse, "which seemed as if he did flie in the air." Armed he was with three feathered darts, and right well could he handle them. About his head he wore a long white towel. His apparel was black, and his own colour brown. The knights of France would fain have taken him, but they could never entrap or enclose him, so swift was his horse, and so ready to his hand.

The "Christen men" said they thought he did such deeds

for the love of some young lady of his country. And true it was that he loved entirely the lady Azala, daughter of the King of Tunis. "I cannot tell," says Froissart as he relates this story, "if they were married together after or not."

After some weeks of this skirmishing, the Saracens bethought them to send a messenger to the "Christen men" to inquire of them wherefore they had come against the town of Afryke. So they took an interpreter, who spoke Italian, and sent him. On the way to the Christen camp the interpreter met a Genoese, and together they went to the "Christen men" and asked them wherefore they had come to Afryke.

Then the Duc de Bourbon held a council of war in his tent, summoning no doubt the two La Trémoilles and their brother-in-law Sully. And, after deliberating as to what answer they should send to their enemies, the knights told the interpreter to say that because the Saracens had crucified Jesus Christ, the Son of God, therefore had the Christen men come against them.

When the interpreter rendered this answer to those who had sent him, the Saracens did nothing but laugh, and say how that answer was nothing reasonable, for it was the Jews who put Christ to death, and not they.

Now this skirmishing and curvetting in the plain had already lasted a month, and no attack had yet been made upon the town. Soon after the answer had been sent to the Saracens, the "Christen men" stormed Afryke and entered within the walls, where many of their number were slain, and whence they were forced to retreat, having failed to capture the town. Then great discontent arose in the army. The Duc de Bourbon was arrogant and lazy. Famine and pestilence attacked the "Christen men," and

also many died of the great heat. Moreover, the knights began to fear the treachery of the Genoese, whose ships had brought them to Afryke. And so, seeing there was nothing more to be done, the "Christen men"—such of them as were left—returned crestfallen to their own homes.

The La Trémoille brothers were among those who had escaped the mischance of war, famine and disease. They with their companions-in-arms assigned the ignominious failure of the expedition to the incompetency of its leader, the Duc de Bourbon, who had done nothing but lounge idly at his tent door, surveying his camp in supercilious taciturnity.

Nothing daunted, however, Sire Guy and his brother began to dream of new conquests. And soon we shall find them setting forth on another crusade. Meanwhile, Guy's sword was not allowed to rust in its scabbard. When there were no English to fight in France, he was ready to strike a blow for any righteous cause that might present itself. Accordingly in the Trémoille archives we find evidence of numerous sums of money received by Sire Guy, as the reward of his military services, from various European potentates, from Pope Clement VII., from Galéas Visconti Duke of Milan, from the Duchess of Brabant, and from the Queen of Naples and Jerusalem. Not that Guy de La Trémoille was a mercenary soldier. He offered his services freely; but when they had been rendered he was apparently not above accepting some financial acknowledgment of them.

In 1391, Charles VI. tendered to Guy de La Trémoille the highest military honour he had to bestow, the sword of the Constable of France. The previous Constable, Olivier de Clisson, unpopular at court, had been deprived of his office, and an attempt had been made to assassinate

him. But Olivier had been Count Guy's friend and companion-in-arms, and La Trémoille loyally refused to profit by his friend's disgrace.

Instead he went with King Charles on an expedition to punish the would-be murderer, who had taken refuge in the heaths of Brittany. It was with Count Guy at his side that, in the broiling August heat, the King at the head of his barons rode forth into the west country, and there was overtaken by the first of those terrible attacks of madness which were to plunge the realm into ruin and confusion.

Soon afterwards, another truce[1] having been signed with England, and sealed by the marriage of the French King's little daughter Isabelle with Richard II., the widower King of England, French and English knights again prepared to wage war in common against the Infidel. And again Guy and Guillaume de La Trémoille took the cross.

At the request of Sigismund, King of Hungary, the Crusaders directed their march towards the Balkans, where that great Ottoman leader, Bajazet, surnamed Ildemin or Lightning, was laying waste the country with fire and sword, advancing to the walls of Constantinople, and boasting that he would feed his horse with a bushel of oats on St. Peter's altar at Rome.

This time the French Crusaders were led by the King's cousin, the young Comte de Nevers, eldest son of Duke Philip, and later to be known as John the Fearless. On the most extravagant and luxurious scale did the French knights make their preparations. Their banners and saddle cloths were embroidered in gold and silver, their

[1] Signed in 1395 for three years, and in the following year prolonged for twenty-eight.

tents were of satin ; carts laden with silver plate and delicate wines followed the army.

Thus equipped, gay and joyous as if for a tournament, commanded by the flower of French chivalry, the crusading host, some 10,000 strong, set forth to join in Hungary the German, Polish, English and Hungarian troops collected by Sigismund.

No sooner had the Crusaders joined forces than dissension broke out in the councils of war. The cautious Sigismund wished to remain on the defensive, while the headstrong French knights insisted on immediately marching in search of the enemy.

Having crossed the Danube at Orsova, the Crusaders proceeded to lay siege to the town of Nicopolis. Then, with a rapidity which justified his name, Bajazet, raising the siege of Constantinople, descended upon the Crusaders before they had the slightest idea that he was even in the neighbourhood. The French lords were at table and already heated with wine, when their scouts brought in the news that Bajazet was upon them. Again the impetuous Comte de Nevers, rejecting the Hungarian King's counsels of caution, insisted on leading his troops to the attack. And at first he was victorious, forcing a rampart of stakes and overcoming even the Janissaries themselves. Then, inflated with pride and zeal, he committed the error of the Comte d'Artois at Mansourah, and allowed the French vanguard to be cut off from the main body of the army. Overwhelmed by numerous squadrons which issued from the woods, these intrepid warriors were surrounded on all sides.

The rank and file, having refused to abjure their faith, were to the number of 10,000 beheaded in the conqueror's presence. Nevers and four and twenty knights

who had escaped slaughter were kept as prisoners and held to ransom. Among them were Lord Guy and his brother.

That year, as the King was keeping Christmas, at Paris, in his Hôtel of St. Paul, there dashed into his presence a messenger from the east, all booted and spurred and dust stained with travel. He was one of the twenty-five prisoners taken at Nicopolis, and Bajazet had released him in order that he might carry to France tidings of the disaster.

It was only with the greatest difficulty that the enormous ransoms which the Turk demanded could be collected. Lord Guy's for the most part was borrowed from the Pallavicini at Geneva. Meanwhile, in order to appease the conqueror's wrath, and secure good treatment of the prisoners, King Charles and Duke Philip sent him rich gifts—a gold salt-cellar of curious workmanship, a cast of Norwegian hawks, and six horse-loads of scarlet cloth, of fine Reims linen and of Arras tapestry, representing the battles of Alexander.

For nine months the prisoners were dragged from place to place in their conqueror's train. And then at length their ransoms arrived.

Before they left him, Bajazet let flie at his prisoners one parting shaft of derision. Summoning the French knights to his presence, he cried : " Raise what puissance ye will, spare nought, and come against me a second time. Ye shall find me always ready to receive ye in the field in plain battle." To point this mockery, and to reciprocate the French King's gifts, Bajazet sent him a mass of iron, a suit of Turkish armour made of wool, a drum and bows with strings made of human entrails.

From Bajazet's camp the French knights sailed in

galleys to the island of Rhodes, staying on their way in the port of Mathelyn. There Guy and his brother were graciously received by the Lady of Mathelyn, who, we read, was as well assured of herself as any lady in Greece, for had she not been brought up at the Emperor Constantine's court with the Lady Mary of Bourbon? And from her she had learnt French nurture, "for in France the lords and ladies were more honorable than in any other countries."

By the Lady of Mathelyn the French knights were newly apparelled in shirts, gowns, and other garments of fine damask, according to the usage of Greece. Then, proceeding to Rhodes, they received from the Grand Prior some gold and silver of which they stood in dire need.

But to Sire Guy it was not given to return to his native land, nor to be buried at Dijon as Duke Philip had directed. For he had never recovered from the wounds received at Nicopolis. At Rhodes a fever fell upon him, and he died on May 4th, 1397, and was buried in the Church of St. John, "the lords of France doing his obsequy right reverently."

Meanwhile, away in France, Marie de Sully was looking eagerly for her husband's return. On May 22nd, 1397, Duke Philip had sent her word that Sire Guy was well, that his ransom had been paid, and that he was on his way home. On August 7th, when she was in her château of Craon, came the news that Guy lay dead in the Island of Rhodes.[1]

A life full of care Dame Marie must have led during her husband's absences on the Crusades. For to raise funds for these expeditions his lands had been heavily mort-

[1] Bertrand de Broussillon, "La Maison de Craon," II., 38.

gaged, and on Marie it had devolved to pay the interest on the money lent, and out of such revenue as remained to keep the princely household going. Now she was left a widow with seven children, four sons and three daughters. Perhaps it was to provide herself and her family with a protector that, soon after Guy's death, she gave a step-father to her children in the person of Charles d'Albret, Constable of France. By him she was to become the ancestress of French Kings, of whom the first was the famous Henry Quatre.

CHAPTER II

GEORGES DE LA TRÉMOILLE. 1382 (?)—1446

"A kind of Gargantua, who devoured the country."[1]

TOWARDS the dawn of the fifteenth century, disruptive forces were everywhere at work throughout Christendom; and among the most powerful were the violence and greed of barons like Georges de La Trémoille.

"Luxury and vice such as 'twere piteous to tell of had kindled against the French the wrath of Heaven, and in the divine hand the King of England was but a rod for chastisement." This was the consolation which Henry V. addressed to Charles, Duke of Orléans, who, having been taken prisoner at Agincourt, in abject grief and utter desolation was refusing food and drink, like many a prisoner of later date.

But in his complacent self-satisfaction, Henry V. failed to discern the true cause of the wickedness he held himself divinely appointed to punish. He would have been the last to admit that his own people, by their perpetual invasions of French territory, had created that prolonged disorder, during which French barons became monsters of iniquity preying upon women and children, and scrupling not even to enter into contracts with the Evil One.

Almost incredible are the hideous crimes said to have been committed in France in those days. The story of the ghastly enormities perpetrated by Gille de Rais, the

[1] "The Life of Joan of Arc," translated from the French of Anatole France, I., 147.

original of Blue Beard, is well known. And Gille was a relative of La Trémoille. The brutality of Georges de La Trémoille himself has seldom been equalled. By his persistent cruelty he caused the death of his first wife. But the victim who suffered most from his cruelty was hapless France. Poverty stricken she was when he found her; yet by his ruthless extortions "he stripped her to the bone, and left her a bloodless corpse, a mere skeleton."

Georges, the eldest son of Guy de La Trémoille and Marie de Sully, was born in the early eighties of the fourteenth century. He was brought up in the household of the Burgundian dukes, first by Duke Philip and, after his death, by his son, John the Fearless.

In 1407, Georges became Duke John's chief Chamberlain, and in that year fought with the Burgundian forces against the citizens of Liège at the battle of Tongres. Then King Charles VI. appointed him Master of Woods and Waters, and Governor of Dauphiné. By this time La Trémoille was one of the boon companions of the worthless Dauphin Louis,[1] generally known as the Duke of Guyenne. And in that capacity he played no inconsiderable part in the troubled events of 1413, one of the most revolutionary years in French history.

Charles VI. was now hopelessly mad, and the royal power was alternately exercised by the leaders of the Burgundian and Orleanist factions, Duke John and Bernard, Count of Armagnac. As leader of the Orleanists, henceforth to be known as Armagnacs, Count Bernard had succeeded Louis, Duke of Orléans, murdered some six years earlier by Burgundy's paid assassins.

[1] Three of Charles VI.'s sons in succession bore the title of Dauphin: Louis, who died in 1415; then Jean, who died in 1416; and then Charles, who, in 1422, succeeded to the throne as Charles VII.

In 1413, however, Burgundians and Armagnacs alike were superseded by the dominance of the Butchers or Cabochiens, the richest, the oldest, and the most influential of the trade corporations of Paris. Including not merely slaughterers and sellers of cattle, but tanners, leather-workers and tripe-dealers, the Butchers were proud to trace back the origin of their corporation to Roman times. Indeed, they considered themselves a commercial aristocracy. Kings and courtiers did not disdain to don the white hood which was the sign of their order. The Butchers' shops descended like feudal fiefs from father to son. Their nobility were the families of St. Yon, of Thibert and of Legoix, who constituted what was called *La Grande Boucherie*, and who dwelt near the present Tour St. Jacques, behind what was then the Châtelet Prison. In those days the citizens of Paris were organised into quarters, each quarter into hundreds, and each hundred into groups of ten. Every quarter had its captain or *quartenier*, whose duty it was to command the watch, and to provide for the defence of his district. In 1413, the captain of the Butchers' quarter was Jean Caboche, who gave his name to the fraternity.

The quarter of Jean Caboche, consisting of an army of slaughterers, salesmen and apprentices, was a formidable force which had to be reckoned with in all city riots. Indeed, considering on the one hand the Crown's weakness and the feuds among the barons, and on the other the Butchers' wealth and compact organisation, it seemed not unlikely that this corporation of Parisian tradesmen might one day come to rule the kingdom.

Duke John of Burgundy was quick to grasp this situation and to turn it to his own advantage, wherefore he made friends with the Butchers, sending them every

year casks of choice wine from his rich vintage of Beaune.

Precisely how far this alliance between Burgundy and the Butchers extended and how much it involved is difficult to tell. At times Duke John seemed to be using the Cabochiens as his instruments, at others the tradesmen seemed to be bending the great Duke to their will and employing him to carry out a policy which was all their own. In the tangled turmoil of events in 1413 it is impossible to say whether it was Burgundy who incited the Butchers or the Butchers Burgundy. But one point is clear: the Butchers believed that all the woes from which France was suffering were caused by the King's lunacy, which was a punishment sent from God[1]; and they held that it was for the sins of royalty God had smitten the King with madness, and struck down his brother, the Duke of Orléans. The Butchers' one hope for the Kingdom of France lay in La Trémoille's friend, the Dauphin Louis; but this hope was tempered by the fear lest he should resemble his father.

In this year, 1413, Louis was seventeen, a much more mature age then than now. For at fifteen Louis' cousin, Charles, Duke of Orléans, was a married man, the father of a family, and the nominal leader of a great party. Yet at seventeen the Dauphin was set on nothing save pageantry and pleasure. This frivolity, however, the Butchers attributed to evil influences, one of the most pernicious of which they considered to be his friendship with La Trémoille. There was no man in France whom the Butchers more bitterly hated. And to separate him from the Dauphin became one of their chief objects throughout this year. Had it not been for the powerful

[1] Michelet, "Hist. de France," Bk. VIII., Chap. III.

influence which Duke John exercised on his behalf, Georges would doubtless have shared the fate of other members of the Dauphin's circle, whom the Butchers drowned in the Seine or imprisoned in the Louvre. The following graphic details of one of La Trémoille's encounters with these tradesmen have been preserved in a chronicle of the period.[1]

It fell out that upon July 10th, 1413, as a little before midnight, a company of Butchers, led by one, Hélion de Jacqueville, a knight of Beauce, were returning from their patrol of the city to their quarters in St. Jacques that they passed by the Hôtel de Guyenne, the Dauphin's palace in the Rue St. Antoine. There the puritanical ears of the watch were offended by the sound of music and of dancing. Highly improper did it seem to Jacqueville and his men that the heir to the fair realm of France should be keeping high revelry at that hour of the night. With other functions of government the Butchers had already assumed the censorship of public morals. And in this capacity they forced their way into the palace, penetrating even into the royal presence chamber.

There finding the Dauphin dancing with his lords and ladies, Jacqueville rated his prince soundly for being a profligate and a spendthrift. But La Trémoille, who was standing by, was the last to tolerate such an intrusion on his own and his prince's pleasures. To Jacqueville's sermon La Trémoille retorted that it was grossly impertinent to address the Dauphin thus, and at such an hour to intrude on the royal presence. In the violent dispute which ensued Louis, in self-defence, drew his dagger and three times smote Jacqueville on the breast, but did

[1] Juvenal des Ursins, "Histoire de Charles VI., Roi de France," ed : Michaud et Poujoulat, Ser. I., Vol. II., p. 485.

him no hurt, because the knight wore a coat of mail beneath his cloak. On the morrow, the Butchers were preparing to take and slay the proud baron who on the previous evening had bearded them in the Dauphin's chamber, when Burgundy intervened on behalf of his vassal, and saved La Trémoille's life.

The arrogant Cabochiens, however, were heading for a fall. The other Parisian corporations would not long brook the insolence of the Butchers. The Carpenters of Paris, declaring they would soon see whether there were not in the city as many hewers of wood as slayers of beasts, called to their aid the Duke of Orléans and the Count of Armagnac, who, with a powerful force, were marching towards the capital.

On his rivals' entrance into Paris, on August 23rd, Duke John prudently withdrew, taking the poor, mad King with him. But a party of citizens intercepted the Duke's company at Vincennes and brought the King back to his capital. Two of the Butchers' leaders were executed, and their quarters in St. Jacques were razed to the ground.

La Trémoille did not, as we might expect, accompany Duke John into exile. Now that the Armagnacs were in the ascendant, and his enemies, the Butchers, deposed from power, Georges forgot the gratitude he owed to Burgundy, and, remaining in Paris with his friend the Dauphin, threw in his lot with the new government. In 1416 we find King Charles undertaking to pay La Trémoille 10,000 francs if he will raise a company of men-at-arms to proceed against the English and the Burgundians. Georges duly performed his part of the bargain. But, when he found that Charles was not so ready to perform his, La Trémoille paid himself the 10,000 francs out of the purse of one of the King's

tax-gatherers who, with a goodly sum collected in Orléans and destined for the royal exchequer, had the misfortune to pass by Sully on his way to court.

When the Dauphin's dissolute court was scattered on Louis' death in 1415, La Trémoille speedily joined the no less licentious circle which gathered round Queen Isabelle at her palaces of Vincennes and Melun.

No name in French history is more execrated than that of Isabelle, Charles VI.'s Queen; for she it was who some years later sold France to the English. Yet her sad history must arouse pity even in the most censorious breast. Radiantly beautiful in youth, she was passionately adored by her royal husband. Then lunacy converted Charles VI. from the most amorous into the most persecuting of consorts. He, whom Isabelle's portrait had once struck dumb with admiration, was now driven frantic by the mere sight of her arms quartered with his own. To save her life the Queen was compelled to establish herself in a separate residence, where her weak, voluptuous nature found consolation in the attentions of numerous admirers. Among them was her brother-in-law, Louis, Duke of Orléans. And it was as, with a song upon his lips, he rode carelessly out of the gateway of the Queen's Hotel, Barbette, into the darkness of the night that Louis had been set upon and slain by the Duke of Burgundy's hired assassins.

Shunning an abode haunted by so sad a memory, the pleasure-loving Queen removed to Vincennes. There she rapidly sank into a valetudinarian and sybaritish old age. She, who had once been the most graceful and agile of horsewomen, grew so corpulent that her valets had to carry her in a chair from room to room. At Vincennes, while the peasants of France were starving, Isabelle

hoarded treasure, and lavished vast sums on all manner of whimsies, on aviaries of singing birds, on menageries, and on marvellous medicines.

To the Queen, in 1415, resorted, as we have said, La Trémoille and all the dead Dauphin's boon companions. And one is not surprised that to contemporary moralists, scandalised by the manners of the Vincennes court, the spindle legs of these gay gallants encased in the tightest of hose and the high-horned, wide-eared head-dresses of their ladies, appeared somewhat devilish.

Soon, however, serious national matters claimed even the attention of these voluptuous courtiers, for the knights of France were summoned to resist Henry of England upon the field of Agincourt. And there, on October 25th, 1415, La Trémoille was taken prisoner. Happily for him, but unhappily for France, he was not considered sufficiently important to be carried away to England with prisoners of higher rank, such as the Duke of Orléans, the Duke of Bourbon, the Count of Vendôme and the Count of Richemont. So, on November 29th, having received from King Henry a robe of fine damask, and undertaken to pay a heavy ransom at the great Lendit Fair at St. Denis on the following Midsummer Day, La Trémoille was liberated at Calais.

We suspect that it was to help pay his ransom that Georges now resolved to take a wife. The unhappy victim he selected was a great heiress, ten years his senior, a princess of the blood royal, Jeanne, Countess of Boulogne and of Auvergne, once the adored wife, and now the widow of the old Duke of Berry.

Only four months after the Duke's death, in the year after Agincourt, Jeanne d'Auvergne and La Trémoille were married.

In the contract signed at Aigueperse, Jeanne unwisely agreed that she and her husband should hold all their property in common. Of this generosity she soon had reason to repent; and, falling out with her rapacious husband, she settled all her wealth on her cousin, Marie d'Auvergne. Meanwhile the Duke of Burgundy, who was Jeanne's overlord, refused to deliver into her husband's hands the county of Boulogne. So, La Trémoille, doubly disappointed in his greed, vented his fury on his miserable wife, whom he imprisoned in a lonely castle of Auvergne until, in 1418, death came to her release.

La Trémoille was now fully launched on a career of rapine and violence. In the neighbourhood of his great castles peace and security were unknown. In order to further his covetous designs he did not hesitate to lay waste whole districts with fire and sword; and from the confusion and disorder already existing in France he made ready to suck no small advantage. Although more than once he was employed to negotiate terms of peace between English and French, Burgundians and Armagnacs, peace was the very last thing he wanted. Had his negotiations been successful, which they never were, he would have pleaded in the words of the troubadour, Bertrand de Born: "When there is peace on every hand let a strip of war be left for me."

In 1418, La Trémoille, apparently without any provocation, had seized Gouge de Charpaignes, Bishop of Clermont, and imprisoned him in his castle of Sully, intending to keep him there until he should pay the ransom his captor demanded. And it was only the appearance before Sully of the Dauphin himself at the head of a formidable army that set the unhappy bishop at liberty.

Now, on his wife's death La Trémoille determined that at any cost he would conquer her inheritance ; and with this object he sent an army into Auvergne. But again his lawless plans were thwarted by the Dauphin, who, in 1423, despatched against him Marshal Gilbert de La Fayette at the head of a formidable force. La Trémoille withdrew his troops from Auvergne, but he never forgave the general who had compelled him to do so ; and when, some years later, he became minister of the Crown, one of his first acts was to deprive La Fayette of the command and to banish him from Court, appointing in his stead his (La Trémoille's) own notorious cousin, Gille de Rais.

After the signing at Troyes in 1420 of that disastrous treaty which made King Henry V. of England heir to the French crown, France became divided into two hostile kingdoms : roughly speaking, the country north of the Loire acknowledged the King of England and was friendly to his great ally the Duke of Burgundy, while the country south of that river was friendly to the Armagnacs and loyal to the mad King's son, the Dauphin Charles, known as " the King of Bourges," because he made that city his capital.[1]

La Trémoille would doubtless have preferred to remain a free lance, independent of either potentate ; but recent events had shown him the disadvantages of such an attitude. His defeat in Auvergne convinced him of the prudence of throwing in his lot with one party or the other, and he selected the Dauphin's because over it, being the weaker, he would have the best chance of domineering.

La Trémoille's choice was fraught with the direst

[1] Charles VI. and Henry V. died in the same year, 1422. Following the custom of the time, we shall describe Charles VII. as Dauphin until, in 1429, he was crowned by Joan of Arc at Reims.

consequences for France. As Councillor-Chamberlain he came to exercise over the Dauphin's mind the most disastrous influence. In the years which preceded La Trémoille's rule the Prince had shown himself capable of acting with wisdom and vigour, after La Trémoille's fall Charles developed into a wise and energetic monarch; but during the years of La Trémoille's ministry he was the meanest, the most phlegmatic, and the most abject of princes. That this monster of iniquity, "this Gargantua who devoured the country," did not succeed in permanently ruining France is chiefly due to Joan of Arc's heroic example and inspiring initiative.

Precisely how La Trémoille came to exercise so pernicious an influence over the Dauphin is somewhat mysterious. The first sign of their alliance was Charles's despatch of La Trémoille in December, 1425, on an embassy to Burgundy at Bruges. And it was on this journey, that at the hands of a free lance, Perrinet Gressart, the Dauphin's emissary suffered that fate which he had so often inflicted on others: he was detained in the citadel of La Charité until he had paid Gressart 14,000 crowns, as well as another 6,000 in the shape of gifts which the prisoner was compelled to bestow on the captains and wife of his captor. One might chuckle with delight to find La Trémoille thus being paid in his own coin, did not the ultimate advantage which he was careful to derive from his imprisonment suggest that, after all, the incident had been planned by the prisoner himself, with a view to compensation. For, on La Trémoille's return to court we find him extracting from the Dauphin the greater part of his ransom and rich lands in Poitou[1] to boot, while no less than seven years later

[1] The lordship and bishopric of Melle.

this same imprisonment gave him an excuse for squeezing out of the Duke of Burgundy a sum of 18,000 crowns.

Quitting Perrinet Gressart's castle, La Trémoille proceeded to Bruges. Concerning the success of his mission to Duke Philip[1] we know nothing. The only incident of this embassy which has come down to us is that the Dauphin's ambassador, when he left the city, carried away with him the wife of one of the citizens, who in the following year was clamouring to be restored to her husband.[2]

La Trémoille, nothing daunted by his failure to secure his first wife's inheritance, was now casting about for her wealthy successor. One of the most richly dowered ladies of the Dauphin's court was the beautiful Catherine de l'Ile Bouchard, Countess of Tonnerre. She happened to be married already, but inconvenient husbands and wives were not difficult to get rid of in those days. Indeed, Catherine's husband, Pierre de Giac, had himself disposed of her predecessor in a manner almost too brutal to bear mention. True, Pierre de Giac was at this time the Dauphin's prime favourite, but that circumstance presented no difficulty, for Charles was used to having his favourites forcibly removed; and the removal of this one was probably facilitated by the connivance of the favourite's wife, and certainly by that of the Constable, Arthur de Richemont. The manner of its accomplishment was characteristic of that brutal age.

Giac was with the Dauphin at his château of Issoudun, when, on the morning of February 8th, 1427, as he lay in bed with his wife, Catherine, the favourite was rudely awakened by a loud knocking at his door. "Who is

[1] John the Fearless had been murdered in 1419 on the Bridge of Montereau.

[2] E. Cosneau, "Le Connétable de Richemont," 141, note 4.

there ? " he cried. " The Constable," was the reply. " Then I am a dead man," groaned Giac, who knew Richemont to be his enemy. The door was broken open and the favourite, clad only in nightgown and slippers, dragged out of the palace and placed on horseback. Catherine the while had flown to her jewel chest, eager to secure it for La Trémoille, who was probably already her lover. Everything was done as quietly as possible for fear of rousing the Dauphin, who was strongly attached to his favourite. But Charles became aware of confusion in the palace, and inquired what was going forward. He was told that what was happening was for his good.

Meanwhile, Giac had been hurried off to the château of Dun-le-Roi, which belonged to Richemont's wife, the Duchesse de Guyenne, widow of the Dauphin Louis. Thence, after a mock trial, an executioner having been brought from Bourges, Giac was cast into the River Auron and drowned. Meanwhile, La Trémoille anxiously rode to and fro near by, impatient for news that Catherine's husband had ceased to breathe. On hearing that his mistress was free, he rode to join her in her castle of Meun, where she was waiting to bestow upon him the jewels she had so carefully guarded from the cupidity of her husband's murderers. After spending some months together at Meun, La Trémoille and Catherine repaired to the former's château of Gençay in Poitou, where they were married on July 2nd. Their wedding, following so soon on Giac's death, caused some astonishment even among the Dauphin's unscrupulous courtiers, who thought that Catherine might have had the decency to wait a little longer before marrying her husband's murderer.

As for the Dauphin himself, after he had recovered

from his first indignation at his favourite's treatment, he easily consoled himself with his successor. This was an obscure person, one Camus de Vernet, knight of Beaulieu, who was no better than his predecessor, and who came to as untimely an end.

After the assassination of Camus, which took place before the Dauphin's very eyes, La Trémoille persuaded the Constable to install him as Charles's chief favourite.

Arthur de Richemont, one of the few disinterested barons of that day, despite the part he had played in Giac's assassination, was in many respects a fine figure. In astuteness and insight into character, however, he must have been deplorably lacking, or he would never have placed in a position of such power so rapacious a person as La Trémoille.

The Dauphin was wiser than his Constable; for, trembling to see Richemont confide in La Trémoille, Charles said: "You will repent it, for I know him better than you do." To this feeble remonstrance the Constable paid no heed; but alas! Charles's words proved only too true, and it was in his treatment of Richemont himself that La Trémoille first verified his Prince's prognostication. The Dauphin was cowed into banishing the Constable from court and bestowing his governorship of Dauphiné upon his rival.

La Trémoille was now supreme; as Councillor-Chamberlain, for six years he ruled; and he was one of the most terrible scourges France has ever known; never, not from Clovis to Charles X., have the national fortunes sunk so low as during that six years of La Trémoille's power.

With half France, including the French capital, given up to the English, with an English army about to cross

the Loire to conquer the remaining half, La Trémoille's only thoughts were the filling of his private purse and the avenging of his private quarrels.

For some years before he became the Dauphin's favourite he had been nothing more or less than the Grand Usurer of the kingdom. He was the first of those great tax-farmers, those leaches who, sucking the nation's life-blood, were to prey upon the national exchequer. And while in those terrible times the King went in tatters and brave soldiers of the Crown and disinterested leaders remained unpaid, for La Trémoille money was always forthcoming. In his private war with Richemont and his allies, La Trémoille, taken prisoner in the Castle of Gençay, insisted on the Dauphin paying his ransom to the tune of 10,000 crowns.

Soon, however, even while the Councillor-Chamberlain with havoc and with bloodshed was rending the fair realm of France, there appeared in more than one quarter of the kingdom signs of a new spirit which was ultimately to defeat La Trémoille and all his nefarious projects. The outrages of the barons and the invasion of a foreign foe gave birth among the oppressed and the conquered to a sentiment of nationality, which was even now revealing itself in different parts of the country: on the Loire, where the neighbouring towns were straining every nerve to succour the gallant citizens of Orléans besieged by the English; in the Dauphin's own circle, where his mother-in-law, Yolande of Arragon, Duchess of Anjou, and Queen of Jerusalem and Sicily, one of the best and bravest women of her time, with political insight and pity for her persecuted country, was devising La Trémoille's fall; and in distant Lorraine, whence a peasant maid at the behest of heavenly voices was setting forth to deliver France.

One isolated good deed, but that a purely negative and an unconsciously meritorious one, may be placed to La Trémoille's account: he offered no opposition to Joan of Arc's employment in the Dauphin's service, and dispatch to the relief of Orléans.

Joan at her trial related that La Trémoille was present among the crowd of courtiers round the Dauphin in the castle of Chinon on that evening in March, 1429, when, clad in doublet and hose, with her hair cut round like a boy's, the maid was ushered into her Prince's presence. A few days later, one morning after mass, La Trémoille with the Dauphin and the Duke of Alençon had a private interview with her. Then he heard her promise the Dauphin that the King of Heaven would do for Charles what He had done for his predecessors, and restore him to his father's dominions.

After events prove that such a consummation was far from the Councillor-Chamberlain's desire. All he expected Joan to do was to restore French courage and initiative so far as to enable them to continue the conflict with the English. La Trémoille wished neither combatant to be completely victorious; but when Joan appeared, there seemed a danger that the English would establish their dominion throughout the land. It was to avert what would have been a personal catastrophe as well as a national disaster that La Trémoille received Joan and sent her with an army to relieve Orléans.

But after her glorious victory at that city, followed by a month of marvellous successes in the Loire valley, La Trémoille, fearing lest Joan should cast the weight of conquest too strongly on his own, the French side, began to oppose her and her forward policy. The first conflict between the Maid and the Minister occurred

over the question of the Constable's restoration to power.

During the Loire campaign, La Trémoille had held aloof from the army, keeping watch and ward over the Dauphin, jealous lest he should fall under the influence of some rival favourite, detaining the Prince in one of the Loire châteaux, most of the time in the great La Trémoille stronghold of Sully. During the Minister's absence, and directly contrary to his command, Arthur de Richemont, with a company of Breton troops, had been permitted to serve in the royal army, and to take part in the crowning victory of Pathay.[1] No sooner was the battle won, than in their gladness and gratitude to the Constable for the aid he had generously granted them, Joan and the Duke of Alençon solicited Richemont's recall. It is the unanimous opinion of expert historians, that had this request been granted, had the Dauphin's army made common cause with the troops which Richemont and his brother, the Duke of Brittany, could raise in western France, the English might speedily have been driven from the country. But La Trémoille was determined not to be reconciled with his rival; and at his Minister's bidding, the Dauphin resolutely refused the Maid's request.

It now became obvious that as long as La Trémoille remained in power the complete discomfiture of the English would be impossible. In the Dauphin's council there were now two parties and two policies: a forward policy advocated by Joan[2] and Alençon, her "fair Duke,"

[1] June, 1429. For a picturesque account of the meeting of the Maid and the Constable, see Anatole France, "Joan of Arc," Eng. trans. I., 364.

[2] Joan was seldom actually admitted to the councils of war. She had, therefore, to rely upon Alençon to advocate her views, which he did loyally.

as she called him; and a temporising policy advocated by La Trémoille and his ally, the Dauphin's Chancellor, Régnault de Chartres, Archbishop of Reims.

On one point the forward party won the day: they succeeded, possibly against the will of the Chancellor and the Chamberlain,[1] in conducting the Dauphin to Reims for his coronation. But on the way to Reims the two parties were in constant conflict, in which Joan was generally worsted. The Maid was for storming the hostile cities which refused to admit the Dauphin's army within their gates; but here for the most part, and notably at Auxerre and Troyes, La Trémoille imposed his more moderate policy, from which, as usual, he reaped personal advantage; in the case of Auxerre, at any rate, the 2,000 crowns paid by the citizens in return for a promise not to storm the town were pocketed by the Minister. After the coronation dissensions between the parties broke out anew, Joan and "her fair Duke" and a powerful faction of the nobility were for marching straight on Paris; La Trémoille, whom Charles at his crowning had created Count, wished to return to the south of the Loire and to negotiate with Burgundy. Now, as always, the Chamberlain had his private advantage in view; through Burgundy's influence Georges wished to recover certain Burgundian lands, formerly belonging to him, which the Duke of Bedford had conquered and bestowed on La Trémoille's younger brother, the Sieur de Jonvelle. In achieving the second part of his project the Minister was partially successful, and a truce for fifteen days, afterwards prolonged, was signed with Burgundy. But in the first of his designs he was thwarted by the English, who cut off the retreat

[1] This matter is obscure and has been much discussed.

of the French towards the south. Thus, much against their will, Charles and La Trémoille were forced into the neighbourhood of Paris, where a series of skirmishes took place with the English, under the Duke of Bedford, who was Regent for the infant King, Henry VI.

In one of these skirmishes at Crèpy-en-Valois, France came near to being delivered from her oppressor, for La Trémoille, contrary to his custom of keeping out of action, mounted a charger richly caparisoned, and, lance in hand, rode into the heart of the *melée*. There, falling from his horse, he would have been slain had not some misguided Frenchman come to his aid.

Still avoiding Paris, Charles, after Crèpy, entered Compiègne.[1] And there La Trémoille re-opened negotiations with Burgundy, attempting to detach him from the English alliance, by offering to make him master of Compiègne. But the citizens of the town refused to be handed over to the Duke. Then, rather than come to a rupture with Philip, La Trémoille carried out one of the most amazing pieces of diplomacy known in history: towards the end of August, Joan and "her fair Duke" had left Compiègne with the object of attacking Paris, of which city the English had appointed Philip governor; after their departure La Trémoille and Charles seem to have promised Burgundy that the attack on Paris should not be seriously prosecuted, and on this condition the truce was renewed.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the operations were somewhat desultory when, on September 8th, an attempt was made to storm the capital. In vain Joan, standing on a mound outside the St. Honoré Gate, called on the citizens to surrender in Jesus' name, threatening, if they

[1] On August 18th, 1429.

yielded not before nightfall, to enter by force and put all to death without mercy. Joan knew nothing of the negotiations at Compiègne. But at nightfall, instead of, as she had hoped, entering triumphantly into Paris, the Maid lay wounded beneath the shelter of a breast-work, urging her men to fill up the moat with faggots and to storm the gates of the city. La Trémoille, however, was commanding the combatants to retreat. Joan refused to obey him, until her Duke sent for her, and even then, as two knights carried her off the field, she was murmuring, " In God's name, the city might have been taken."

It did not accord with La Trémoille's purpose that Paris should be taken, or that Joan should win any more decisive victories. Therefore he persuaded Charles to refuse Alençon's request that the Maid might be sent with him to cut off the base of the enemy's communications in Normandy, and he kept her in the Loire valley, where there was no chance of her being able to strike a decisive blow. Here, although but ill supported, Joan, by her heroism and persistence, succeeded in taking by storm the town of St. Pierre-le-Moustier, but she was repulsed at La Charité.

Even such partial success was not to La Trémoille's liking. Therefore for some weeks in the spring of 1430, he detained the Maid with the King and himself in his castle of Sully. Many a time during those weary weeks of waiting must Joan have gazed regretfully from the towers of Sully up that great northern road leading to Paris and to those fields of battle, whither she longed to return.

At length, in the last days of March, the Maid, with a small body of soldiers, was permitted to fare forth.

La Trémoille's hopes of a compact with Burgundy had been finally disappointed by a renewal of the alliance between Duke Philip and England. And so Joan was left free to open that last campaign which was to end in her capture by the Burgundians outside the walls of Compiègne.

There are those who do not hesitate to accuse La Trémoille of having planned the capture of the Maid. That at almost every turn he had thwarted her patriotic designs there is no doubt whatever, but that he deliberately betrayed her into the hands of the Burgundians has never been sufficiently proved. The Chamberlain's record is black enough without this charge being laid to his door.

If from such a crime he may be exonerated there is, however, another offence towards the Maid, and one equally heinous, of which he must be accused. In the cruel indifference to Joan's fate displayed by the King and his council, we cannot fail to trace the influence of La Trémoille. During the year which elapsed between her capture at Compiègne in May, 1430, and her execution at Rouen in May, 1431, not an effort was made for her deliverance. La Trémoille was then all powerful at court, and had he made the slightest movement either diplomatic or military for Joan's rescue he would doubtless have been seconded by many among the King's nobles. But for the Chamberlain the Maid was nothing more than a kind of charm, a figure-head to encourage the army. And, Joan taken, any other charm would do equally well, a shepherd-boy with stigmata from the heaths of Gévaudan or a devout woman from La Rochelle, one of the Maid's own companions.

Fortunately for France the years of La Trémoille's

power were already numbered. His increasing arrogance and greed were raising against him among the French nobility a powerful party led by Queen Yolande, the Constable and the Constable's brother, John, Duke of Brittany. At the close of one of the Chamberlain's devastating private wars against Richemont, Queen Yolande negotiated a treaty by which La Trémoille was to deliver the town of Montargis to the Constable. But before the surrender of the town took place it fell into the hands of the English, and—so it was believed—with the connivance of the Chamberlain.

So dastardly a deed brought to a head the hatred of the King's favourite. In the same year, 1431, at the funeral of the Duchess of Brittany, which took place at Vannes, a plot was formed against La Trémoille's life. It took effect in the following June (1433), when the Chamberlain was with the King at Chinon, lodged in that very Coudray Tower which had sheltered Joan four years earlier. Admitted to the tower by night through a postern gate, four of the conspirators, among whom was La Trémoille's own nephew, Jean de Bueil,[1] followed by some twenty men-at-arms, made their way to the Chamberlain's room. There, in the struggle which ensued, La Trémoille received a sword-thrust in the stomach ; but like the wicked of the Psalmist, " enclosed in his own fat," for he was a very barrel of a man, his " Falstaffian paunch " saved his life. And Jean de Bueil was content to carry him off a prisoner to the Château of Montrésor. There he who had so often exacted an exorbitant ransom from others was himself compelled to buy his liberty with 4,000 crowns and a promise to keep away from the King and from

[1] His father was La Trémoille's brother, the Sieur de Jonvelle.

affairs of state. The King's quarters at Chinon were almost opposite his favourite's, and, as at the time of Pierre de Giac's arrest, Charles was roused in the night by the sound of mailed feet and the clashing of arms. But once again it was not difficult to persuade him that the disturbance augured nothing but good. And we cannot believe that Charles grieved at being rid of this monster who was devouring his kingdom.

Queen Yolande had now no one to oppose her beneficent designs: she was able therefore to restore the Constable to power, to encourage Charles to adopt as his favourite her own son, Charles of Anjou, and to receive as his mistress the famous and fascinating Agnes Sorel.

Under Angevin influence the King became a new man, displaying energy, prudence and courage, and appearing the precise contrary of that *roi fainéant* who used, in La Trémoille's day, to skulk in some distant castle far removed from the enemy and the battlefield.

Under the rule of this new Charles VII., resistance to the English was vigorously organised, Paris was taken, peace made with Burgundy, and the invaders driven back until they retained only the maritime provinces; at the same time the power of the turbulent French barons was curbed, and that work of centralisation begun which was carried on and completed by Charles's great successors, Louis XI., Henry IV. and Louis XIV.

Not without a struggle, however, was this great work inaugurated. On his vast domains in Poitou, Limousin, Anjou, Touraine and Berry, La Trémoille was still powerful; Jean de Bueil's mercy—or was it his greed for the 4,000 crowns ransom?—had left the monster's wings insufficiently clipped. His castles were

centres of brigandage and sedition to which resorted all the discontented nobles of the realm. Here was hatched that wide-spreading revolt of the French barons known as "the Praguerie."[1] The immediate cause of this rising was the royal *ordonnance* issued in 1439, which summoned before the King's court all barons who in defiance of the King had arrogated to themselves the right to impose taxes in their dominions, who had appropriated the royal taxes or interfered with their collection. The *ordonnance* was clearly aimed against La Trémoille and his associates; and it was the signal for their concerted movement against the Crown.

The barons chose for their leader no less a personage than the Dauphin, the King's own son, who later as Louis XI. was to prove the most formidable foe to those ambitions of the nobility which he was now furthering.

Louis demanded that the control of public affairs should be placed in his hands. To the standard of revolt which he raised at Blois in 1440, flocked not only barons but princes of the blood royal, among them Joan's "fair Duke," Alençon, while from Poitou La Trémoille wrote that he would command the forces of the rebels in that province.

It seemed as if the fire of civil strife were about to be rekindled throughout the kingdom. But the promptitude and vigour of the King and his Constable immediately quenched the flame. Rightly regarding La Trémoille's rising in Poitou as the focus of discontent, Charles and Richemont marched straight into that province, and in a few weeks from the raising of the rebel

[1] After the Hussite rebellion in Bohemia, which some time before had centred at Prague.

standard sedition was completely quelled, and the barons were summoned to appear before the King's court. Among the rebels there was one whom the King refused to see : La Trémoille he would not admit to his presence. But this wily baron, ever eager to safeguard his own interest, had obtained in writing from the Dauphin a promise of his support, and a guarantee that as long as he lived he should enjoy his pension and other revenues. In accordance with this undertaking Louis refused to submit to his royal father unless the King agreed to pardon La Trémoille. Charles, however, refused to grant his son's demand. " Then I shall go back with the rebels," said Louis. " The doors are open to you," replied the King, " and if they are not wide enough, I will cause some hundred feet of the wall to be broken down so that you may pass through at your will." Charles's firmness won the day, and reduced all the revolted barons to submission.

As long as La Trémoille lived, however, Poitou continued a centre of discontent. In 1442, Charles was compelled again to proceed in person against his former favourite, and to capture several of his strongholds. Nevertheless, the Chamberlain continued his old work, and, in 1446, an action was brought against him in the King's court for spoliation and homicide. Yet, but a short time afterwards, in March that year, when the new Duke of Brittany, Francis I., came to render homage to King Charles, we find La Trémoille appearing once more at court in all the state of his high office of Councillor-Chamberlain. In the following May, a pardon for all past offences, which fifteen years earlier he had wrested from his docile master, was registered among the royal charters.

But possibly by that time the culprit was already beyond the reach of any human pardon, for on the 6th of that month La Trémoille expired in his castle of Sully, where he was buried ; and France was delivered from one of the most terrible of her oppressors.

CHAPTER III

TWO LOYAL SERVANTS OF KING LOUIS XI

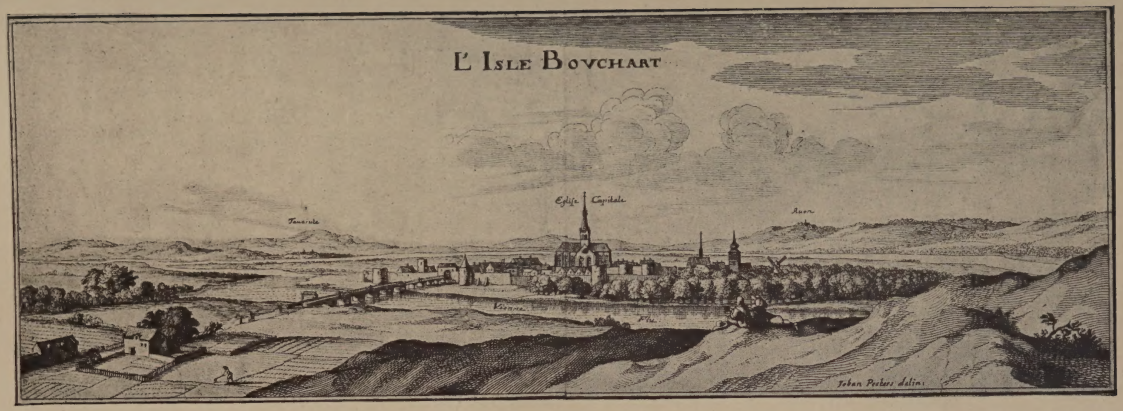
LOUIS DE LA TRÉMOILLE, DIED 1481.
GEORGES DE LA TRÉMOILLE, SEIGNEUR DE CRAON, DIED 1483.

LATER La Trémoilles were hardly proud of their notorious ancestor. From the recesses of the family cupboard, down through succeeding ages, the bloated features of the Councillor-Chamberlain, "that toper, that barrel of a man," grinning like an ogre, haunted his posterity. His very physical semblance was abhorred, and whenever one of his descendants began to display a tendency to his forbear's corpulence it was striven against by violent exercises worthy of a mediæval Sandow.

Fortunately for France and for the La Trémoilles, while the Chamberlain's physical features reproduced themselves in his sons, his grandsons, and even his great-grandson, this was not the case with his character; and it is only in his remote descendant, Catherine de Médicis,[1] in her unscrupulous egoism and in her disruptive policy, that Georges' moral defects were continued. Meanwhile, for the sins of their father and grandfather, La Trémoilles were striving to atone by the loyalty and courage with which they served the French crown and the French nation.

The Chamberlain's two sons—Louis, and especially

[1] See genealogical table. p. 43, n.


L' Isle Bovchart
Eglise
Capitale
Auvers
Tenaille
Riviere
Pont
Johan Peeters delin:

his second son, a second Georges, the famous Seigneur de Craon—as loyal servants of King Louis XI. did their best to destroy their father's wicked work, and out of that chaos for which he was largely responsible, to create a new French nation, the most compact, the most harmonious, and the most united in Europe.

When the Councillor-Chamberlain died, his wife Catherine was still living. She resided in her lordly castle of Ile Bouchart. And there, though her sons were well past the age when boys were accustomed to escape from their mother's control, she kept them in tutelage, expecting them to obey a poor relation, one Péan de la Vallée, whom she had set over her household. Louis and Georges, already chafing beneath the maternal yoke, absolutely refused submission to their mother's steward, who by his *malgracieux* treatment of the youths drove them to flee from Ile Bouchart, Louis to his château of Bommiers in Berry, Georges to the court of Duke Philip at Brussels. Thence, after a

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GENEALOGICAL TABLE SHOWING THE DESCENT OF CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS FROM GEORGES DE LA TRÉMOILLE.

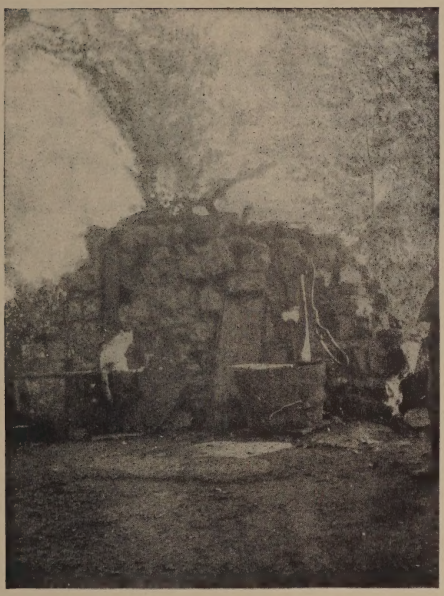
Georges de La Trémoille

- Louis I.
- Georges, Seigneur de Craon
- Louise *m.* Bertrand VI., Comte d'Auvergne et de Boulogne, grandson of Marie d'Auvergne, Jeanne d'Auvergne's cousin.
  - Jean de La Tour, Comte d'Auvergne, *m.* Jeanne de Bourbon.
    - Madeleine de La Tour, *m.* (Jan., 1518) Lorenzo di Medici, Duke of Urbino.
      - Catherine de Médicis.

while, Georges was induced to return to Ile Bouchart by his mother's promise to marry him to a wealthy heiress, the daughter of the Seneschal of Normandy. On inquiry, however, the conditions of this marriage proved to be less advantageous than the young Seigneur de Craon had believed. Still, he stayed on at his mother's castle, apparently plotting against her steward, for, at a hunting party in 1458, Georges took Péan prisoner and carried him off to Burgundy. There, on the steward's promising to break off all relations with the Countess, Craon set him at liberty. But no sooner was Péan free than he cited his captor to appear and answer for his violence before the chief magistrate of Touraine at Chinon. Georges, however, pleading ill-health as a reason for his non-appearance, appealed to the King to pardon him ; and in this appeal he was supported by his mother, who may have grown as tired of her old favourite as many years previously she had done of her first husband. Charles VII. granted the pardon. And in the document which awarded it may be read all the incidents of the Seigneur de Craon's quarrel with his mother's steward, related, it must be remembered, entirely from Craon's point of view.

Like his great contemporary, the historian, Philippe de Commines, Georges de Craon having first served the Dukes of Burgundy, Philip the Good and his son Charles the Rash, transferred his allegiance to their mortal enemy, the King of France, Louis XI., who succeeded to the throne in 1461.

For nine years, from 1468 till 1477, Craon, alike in the council-chamber and on the battle-field, was one of King Louis' most effective instruments in that long struggle with Duke Charles of Burgundy, whose defeat and death



ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE CASTLE OF L' ILE BOUCHART

at the battle of Nancy was to be one of the chief corner-stones in the building of modern France.

It was during the sack of Liège, in 1468, that Craon and King Louis met and came to terms. The King shortly before, having gone to Péronne to confer with his enemy, had there been taken prisoner and only released in exchange for a promise to aid Burgundy in besieging the town of Liège. At this siege Craon was present in command of a Burgundian company and charged with defending the outposts. In this capacity he gallantly repulsed a night sortie, pursuing the besieged within the gates and thus giving the signal for a general attack, which resulted in the capture of the city.

Struck with admiration of La Trémoille's prowess, Louis determined to win him for his own service. What means he employed, whether he offered bribes in the form of high office and rich lands, or whether he relied solely on his own magnetic personality and power of persuasion we do not know. At any rate, he induced Georges de Craon to forsake the Duke ; and straightway the Seigneur was admitted to the King's Council and created Lord High Chamberlain.

More a conflict of keen wits than of weapons of war was this duel between France and Burgundy. The diminutive figure of Louis XI., his foxy face, with its hawk-like nose, its sly eyes and thin lips, suggest the diplomatist rather than the warrior. More than once a great army was discomfited by Louis' wiles. And Craon was almost as able a diplomatist as his master. La Trémoille was present at that mysterious interview on a bridge over the Somme, which resulted in the Treaty of Picquigny, when the sovereigns of England and France leered at one another through a barrier of lattice-work, and the

English King was induced, without striking a blow, to withdraw his lordly host from French territory.

But the Seigneur de Craon's two most brilliant diplomatic achievements were the winning for France of two powerful allies, René II.,[1] Duke of Lorraine, and the Confederation of the Swiss Cantons.

One of Duke Charles's ambitious projects was the conquest of Lorraine, which, extending as it did from Verdun on the north to Franche Comté on the south, cut his Burgundian possessions in two. Craon, who was then Governor of Champagne, was the Duke of Lorraine's neighbour. This gave him an opportunity of working on René's fears of Burgundian conquest, and on his hopes of French reward, and by these means of winning, in the year 1474, his alliance for Louis XI. Then, in conjunction with René, Craon laid siege to Pierre Fort and captured this Burgundian stronghold, which was but five miles from the Lotharingian capital of Nancy. Duke Charles, however, retaliated by overrunning Lorraine and annexing it. Now it seemed as if René had done a foolish thing in throwing in his lot with the French King. But René's day of vengeance was to come.

Meanwhile, Craon had been contracting that other alliance, with the Swiss Cantons. Liberally bribed with French gold, the Swiss entered into a covenant with King Louis for ten years, and in the autumn of this same year, 1474, invaded the Burgundian province of Franche Comté, defeating the Burgundians at Hericourt and sacking Pontarlier. Two years later Charles, uniting all his forces against the Cantons, met the Swiss near Lake Neufchatel, where he suffered two serious defeats at their hands in the battles of Grandson and Morat.

[1] Reigned from 1473—1508.

Louis xi. Roy de France

Before Burgundy could recover from these disasters, René had begun to reconquer his duchy ; he had already recaptured Nancy and other fortresses when Charles led an army against him. On January 5th, 1477, beneath the walls of his capital, René at the head of a Swiss army inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Duke of Burgundy. Already the two alliances negotiated by the Sire de Craon had served their purpose : Lorraine was safe from Burgundian ambition and the power of Charles le Téméraire lay in the dust.

At the close of the battle, the Duke himself was missing. His fate was uncertain ; and in the letter which the Sire de Craon despatched to his royal master, all he could tell was that Burgundy had suffered a crushing defeat. But that was good enough for Louis ; whether Charles were alive or dead, these tidings filled the King with exaltation. And straightway, by that royal post which he was the first to institute in France, he despatched to his Governor, Craon, the following letter :—

" Monsieur le Comte, my friend, I have received your letters, and heard the good news they contain, for which I thank you with all my heart. Now is the time to employ all your five natural senses in order to put the duchy and county of Burgundy into my hands. And, if so be that the Duke of Burgundy is dead, then as Governor of Champagne, enter the said country with your army, and, as you love me dear, hold it for me. Among your men-at-arms keep order as if you were in Paris, and prove to the inhabitants that I intend to treat them as well as any of my subjects.

" With regard to our goddaughter,[1] I intend to conclude the marriage, which already I have negotiated, between her and my Lord the Dauphin.

[1] Mary, daughter of Charles the Rash, and his heiress, for he left no son. She afterwards married Maximilian of Austria, later Emperor.

" My lord Count, I do not wish you to enter the aforesaid countries or to mention the above in the case that the Duke of Burgundy should be still living. And in this matter I trust to you to serve me.

" Farewell. Written at Plessis-du Parc,[1] the 9th of January.

Signed " Louis." [2]

The messenger who bore this letter met upon the road another messenger from the Sire de Craon, who was travelling to the King with the news of his great enemy's death. For a whole day after the battle the Duke's fate was unknown. The engagement was fought on a Sunday, and it was not until the following Monday evening that there was brought to Duke René an Italian page who told how he had seen Burgundy fall. After a long search on the battlefield, the Duke's body was found. Though covered with wounds, it was not so defaced that it could not be recognised by his laundress, his valet, and his doctor.

The Battle of Nancy marks the climax in the Seigneur de Craon's prosperity. After that victory there began to come upon him the physical and moral defects of his family. " The said Seigneur de Craon was an exceedingly fat man," writes Commines.[3] And with his father's corpulence, Craon began to reveal a tendency to develop his father's vices. In the Duchy of Burgundy, where King Louis, after Nancy, had established him in command, La Trémoille permitted and possibly even perpetrated *grandes pilleries*, while by arrogance and quarrelsomeness he alienated one of Louis' most powerful allies, the

[1] Doubtless Louis' favourite residence in Touraine, better known as Plessis-les-Tours.

[2] See " Archives d'un Serviteur de Louis XI.," pp. iv. and v.

[3] " Mémoires," ed. Mich. et Poujoulat, Ser. I., Vol. iv., 145.

Prince of Orange. The Prince retaliated by raising a great part of the duchy against the French. Consequently after he had suffered a severe defeat at the Battle of Dôle, Craon was deprived of the Burgundian command.

After this disgrace La Trémoille retired from public life. But he had learnt his lesson. On his estates in Barrois and Mayenne, where he spent the remnant of his days, he lived as a law-abiding vassal of the King, occupying himself in good works and pious foundations. At his château of Craon in Mayenne he died in the year 1481.

His domestic experiences were not unlike his father's, for Craon's consort, Marie de Montauban, like his father's first wife, Jeanne, ended her life in prison. Accused of betraying her husband and even of plotting with one of her lovers to poison him, Marie was condemned by order of Louis XI. to perpetual imprisonment. She died without children ; and her husband bequeathed all his vast estates to his elder brother, Louis.

Louis de La Trémoille, having served in the army of Charles VII. against the English, on the accession of Louis XI. retired to his estates, where he lived the life of a pious country gentleman. By his loyalty and orderliness, Count Louis, although holding aloof from public affairs, was a tower of strength to his sovereign in that part of France. Had La Trémoille with his great wealth and numerous vassals thrown in his lot with the discontented barons, that Mad War which broke out some years after his death might have occurred earlier, and been less worthy of its name. Yet La Trémoille had better reasons for quarrelling with his sovereign than many of his discontented neighbours. For the greater part of the vast inheritance, the estates of Talmond and of Thouars, which should have come to him with his wife Marguerite

d'Amboise[1] had been seized by the King, who had bestowed them on his favourites. How by the persistence of Louis' famous son, Count Louis II., these estates were regained and united to the family dominions is another story which shall be told in the following chapter.

[1] The daughter of Louis, Vicomte d'Amboise.

CHAPTER IV

LA TRÉMOILLES IN THE ITALIAN WARS

LOUIS II., 1460—1525. CHARLES, 1485—1515.
FRANCIS, 1502—1542.

WHILE Craon was fighting the King's battles, in his brother's château of Bommiers, in Berry, was growing up a golden-haired, hazel-eyed boy, Louis, the son of Louis. This youth was to be the typical knight of chivalry, and by his lustrous deeds to atone for the family ogre's villainy. In the midst of the family picture Louis II. de La Trémoille stands out like a veritable demi-god. His well-knit frame, curly locks, aquiline nose, and decided chin are those of the *verie parfit gentil knyghte*. "The greatest captain of the world," his contemporaries called him, "the glory of his century," "the jewel of the French monarchy," and, like Bayard, "the knight without reproach." [1]

Yet despite his heroic qualities Louis did not stand aloof from his comrades, proudly looking down on them from a pedestal of stern virtue. With his companions in arms he was hail-fellow-well-met. And though, in writing, they may have lavished upon him the laudatory epithets we have quoted, in speech they called him by a nickname, suggested by his favourite oath *Lavraye-corps-*

[1] Bayard, however, was "the knight without *fear* and without reproach."

Dieu, a pseudonym, somewhat profane, and a trifle lengthy, but doubtless familiarly contracted.[1]

The story of Louis' career was recorded by one of his own retainers, Jean Bouchet, a Poitiers lawyer, in a biography entitled "Le Panegyric du Chevalier sans Reproche."[2]

The extravagant adulation of this book cannot fail to fill with misgiving the critical modern reader. And in order to gratify his judicial sense we have searched diligently but with no great success in the La Trémoille archives for the reverse side of Bouchet's flattering picture. Our hero's gravest failings, as revealed by these family documents, are a tendency to hold too loosely the strings of his well-filled purse and a passion for games of chance. With King Francis, his mother, Louise of Savoy, and his much-tried Consort, Queen Claude, La Trémoille lost heavily at cards. We may conclude, therefore, that when Louis' good wife, Gabrielle de Bourbon, is found pledging her jewels and silver plate, and converting her ornaments into golden crowns of the sun, it may not always have been to pay for the equipment of her husband and his retainers in expeditions of war.

But when all is said these are no very serious offences; card-playing for high stakes was common in those days, and excessive liberality may almost be regarded as a weakness becoming to a hero.

Louis opened his career in the truly heroic manner by running away from home. In his childhood at Bommiers, with his younger brothers, Jean, Jacques and Georges, he had played at being a soldier. Trained

[1] See Brantôme, "Œuvres Complètes," ed. Lalanne, II., 393 *et seq.*, where he cites the favourite oaths of great captains. The most curious is that of La Roche-du-Mayne, *Teste Dieu pleine de reliques*.

[2] Ed. Mich. et Pouj., Ser. I., Vol. IV., 405—478.

to run, to wrestle, to leap, to draw the bow and to wield the sling, he and his brethren loved to fight sham battles and engage in sham sieges. But soon of this world of make-believe Louis wearied. His first taste of real life came when he was permitted to ride forth with his father to hunt in the forests of Berry, and then sport so absorbed him that he would pass whole days without food or drink.

But not even the excitement of the chase satisfied his craving for adventure. Stories of the King's court and of the band of noble youths whom Louis XI. was gathering round the Dauphin and training for knightly deeds, penetrated even to remote Bommiers, and young La Trémoille longed to enter this school of chivalry. It was therefore a bitter disappointment when the Count, because of his quarrel with the King, refused his sovereign's demand that the young Louis should join the youthful band at court, those striplings whom the King was bringing up, not entirely for their own good but also as hostages for their Sires' loyalty.

Shortly afterwards, during a long night in the forest, when, having lost his way on one of his hunting expeditions, Louis had ample time for meditation, he resolved that should his father continue to refuse to send him to court, he would take the matter into his own hands and set forth on his own account.

The Count proving obdurate, the young Louis took with him as companion another noble youth, and secretly started. But his absence was soon discovered ; he was overtaken and ignominiously brought home.

Barely had the truant returned when there reached Bommiers a second royal messenger, summoning the boy to court in tones so peremptory that this time his

father dared not disobey. So our hero, instead of being punished for his truancy, heard the welcome news that his dearest wish was to be gratified. A fortnight later, in high glee as we may imagine, clothed in rich attire and accompanied by the comrade of his former evasion, Louis set out on his adventures.

Having been graciously welcomed at court by the King and by his uncle, the Seigneur de Craon, the young La Trémoille was admitted to the circle of noble youths, whom the King in his capacity of " universal guardian " had gathered round the Dauphin Charles.

And there in courtly duties and martial exercises Louis' days passed pleasantly. A fear, however, began to haunt this fair stripling ; his figure began to fill out too rapidly, and there came upon him the horrid dread of his grandfather's bloated obesity ; wherefore, with renewed vigour, he engaged in all manner of violent exercises, subjecting himself to the severest discipline of diet, with the result that his persistent efforts were rewarded, the terrible fate of a resemblance to the family ogre was averted ; and Louis remained slim and agile to the end of his days.

" A young shoot, plucked withal from an old Burgundian stock, yet growing to be a hedge of defence for the realm of France, and a rod wherewith to beat Burgundy," thus did the wily King, with a gleam in those foxy eyes of his, describe Count Louis' son. Thirteen years old was Louis when he came to court ; five years he passed in martial and courtly training. Then at eighteen he was at length permitted to engage in active service, and to accompany his uncle Craon to the conquest of Burgundy.

So fair a youth was not destined to escape the darts

THE CHÂTEAU WALL AT BOMMIERS

of love, and Bouchet, in the long-winded fantastic manner of the mediæval romance, spins out to an interminable length the story of his hero's first gallant adventure. But doubtless our readers will brook abridgment and rest satisfied to know that, as frequently happened in mediæval story, the lady of Louis' desire was already the wife of another, and of the lover's most intimate friend; that while Louis' Dulcinea returned his love, and while the lovers confessed their passion to one another, they successfully concealed it from the husband until one day their amorous glances betrayed them; but that, still true to the heroic tenor of the popular tale, the husband, magnanimously relying upon the honour of his wife and friend, placed no obstacle in the way of their meeting; and that thus trusted the lovers felt bound to subject their passion to their honour. Fortunately, such a stern trial of their virtue Louis and his lady had not long to endure, for soon the knight was summoned from court to Bommiers, where his father lay at the point of death. There, surrounded by his children, Count Louis passed away in the year 1483.

Our hero was now Count of La Trémoille, the possessor of a great fortune and the lord of vast domains. And we hear nothing more of his romantic affection. Descending rapidly from high-flown romance to mere material concerns, the Count's chief object now became to obtain from the King the restoration of those confiscated lands,[1] that part of the Amboise inheritance which, as we have said, Louis XI. had bestowed on his favourites.[2]

Accordingly, soon after his father's funeral, the Count

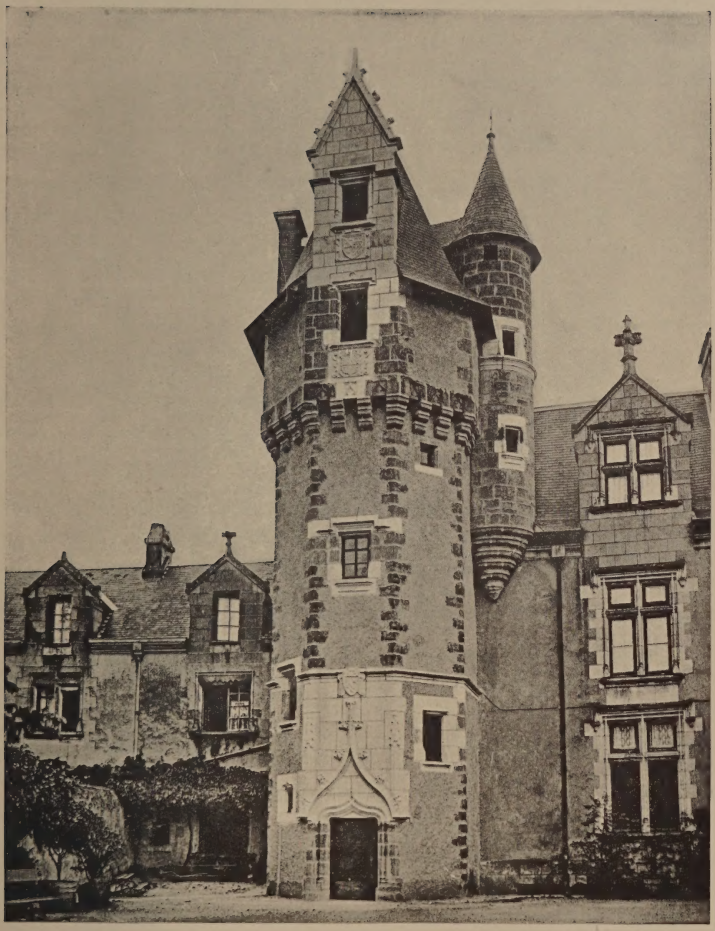
[1] Besides Thouars and Talmond, these estates included the lordship of Mauléon, the principalities of Berrie, Ile de Rhé, Marans, and other lands in Poitou and Saintonge.

[2] One of them was the historian, Philippe de Commines.

set forth with his brothers for the Touraine château of Plessis-les-Tours, where the King was residing. At Plessis, by the intervention of the Archbishop of Tours, La Trémoille's complaint was presented to Louis, who promised to restore the confiscated dominions. But death overtook him before he had time to fulfil his undertaking. It was left for King Louis' virile daughter, Anne de Beaujeu, who, during the minority of her brother, the thirteen-year-old Charles VIII., practically ruled the kingdom, to fulfil her father's promise to La Trémoille. On September 30th, 1483, the rich estates of Amboise passed into Count Louis' possession. Henceforth Louis and his descendants, as well as Counts of La Trémoille, were Viscounts of Thouars [1] and Princes of Talmond.

The town of Thouars,[2] on the Thouet, which now belonged to the La Trémoilles, had once, during the English occupation of western France, been a favourite residence of English kings. Henry II. built there a palace with two towers, la Tour au Prévôt and la Tour Grenetière,[3] of which the ruins may be seen to-day. The façade of the old palace, bearing the arms of the kings of England, was still standing at the Revolution. But the Republican government insisted on the then occupant, Madame de Bournisseaux, removing the sign of royalty from its walls. After 1483, Thouars may be regarded as the La Trémoille capital in the west. In the ancient palace of English kings the La Trémoilles lived until the seventeenth century, when a duchess of La Trémoille built on the banks of the Thouet one of the most magnificent châteaux in France.[4]

[1] Thouars was to be created into a duchy by Charles IX. in 1563.
[2] In the department of Sèvres.
[3] See illustration.
[4] See *ante*, VI., and *post*, 133 and 200.



LA TOUR AU PRÉVÔT

Part of the old La Trémoille château at Thouars, built by King Henry II of England

Thouars was of great ecclesiastical importance, for within its walls lay buried St. Laon de Cursay, to whose shrine for many a year had flocked multitudes of the mentally afflicted. Marvellous miracles had been worked there, and, besides the church named after the saint and built over his tomb, numerous other sacred edifices had been erected.

Count Louis and his pious wife, Gabrielle de Bourbon, richly endowed all these ecclesiastical foundations, while not far from their palace they built the fine church of Notre Dame. In a chapel of this church dedicated to St. Médard were to be buried the La Trémoilles of future generations. The fine tombs of Count Louis and his wife in the choir were destroyed at the Revolution ; but in the crypt the bodies of their descendants to this day rest in peace.[1]

Anne de Beaujeu had inherited her father's shrewdness. Therefore she was quick to realise the importance of securing the services of so brilliant a knight as Louis de La Trémoille. She admitted him to the royal council, and proposed his marriage with Gabrielle de Bourbon, a princess of the blood royal, a descendant of St. Louis, and a daughter of the Count of Montpensier. Louis, completely cured of his earlier romantic attachment, gladly welcomed Anne de Beaujeu's proposal, and when he saw Gabrielle's portrait, he became still more eager for the match. To this ardent lover's disappointment, Madame de Beaujeu refused to permit him to conduct his wooing in person. A gentleman of the court was charged to journey into Auvergne, to the castle of Montpensier, where the lady dwelt, and to bear a letter

[1] The late Duke, Louis Charles de La Trémoille, however, was interred at Serrant.

proposing the marriage. But Louis, determined to circumvent Madame's prudent designs, like a true knight-errant disguising himself as one of the messenger's retainers, accompanied him to Auvergne. There he penetrated into the Montpensier château and himself presented the letter. Then for his pains the masquerading suitor was fully rewarded by hearing Mdlle. de Montpensier say as she read the missive, that though she had never seen the Comte de La Trémoille, his fame was so fair, that she would esteem herself happy in becoming his wife.

Gabrielle, as may be imagined, was only flattered when she discovered the trick her gallant had played her. The course of their love ran smooth, and, on July 28th, 1484, at the castle of Escolles in Auvergne, they were married.

Bouchet in his biography of La Trémoille draws a striking picture of Countess Gabrielle, representing her as a fine type of the cultured Frenchwoman in austere pre-Renaissance days, before the Italian wars had introduced into French châteaux Italian luxury and freedom.

Unlike her husband, Dame Gabrielle had literary tastes. She was even the author of treatises, the solemn tenor of which is betokened by such titles as *le Chasteau de Sainct Esprit*, *l'Instruction des Jeunes Filles*, and *le Viateur*. These works the excellent Bouchet found to be so well written, that he had difficulty in believing they were by a woman—*i.e.*, until he recollected that Madame Gabrielle had had the good sense to appeal to his sound judgment and that of other members of the superior sex for advice as to their composition. For Madame Gabrielle knew her place as a mediæval woman. She recognised the limits that men set to her poor feminine intelligence; and, though a devout Christian, she forbore to inquire too

closely into the mysteries of religion, exercising a discretion which the good Bouchet highly commends. For the Poitiers lawyer the Countess was an ideal woman ; and in terms of the highest praise, he recounts how she used to spend her day. Having paid her devotions, she passed most of her time in embroidery and other domestic avocations, surrounded by her numerous ladies, who all belonged to noble houses. Then for a space she would withdraw into the privacy of her book-lined closet to read some history or moral discourse, or herself compose one of her pious treatises.

Dame Gabrielle's love of letters was inherited by her son Charles, Prince de Talmond, born the year after his parents' marriage, and in early years the author of elegant epistles and rondeaux. If in mind Prince Charles resembled his mother, in physique he was a true La Trémoille. And in his case not the severest discipline or the most violent exercise succeeded in counteracting the family corpulence : had death not cut short his career he would probably have become as fat as his great-grandfather.

But we are anticipating. We must return to a time before so dark a destiny threatened the Prince, when he was but an infant in the cradle. In 1485 a number of discontented nobles, led by the King's cousin, Louis Duc d'Orléans, who aimed at replacing Anne de Beaujeu in the Regency of the realm, rose in rebellion, and waged another mad war. The revolt had lasted but a few months, when, being utterly worsted, the rebels laid down their arms. Shortly afterwards, however, the malcontents formed a new league in which they included Maximilian, Archduke of Austria. War broke out again in 1487. It was waged chiefly in Brittany, where Nantes obstinately

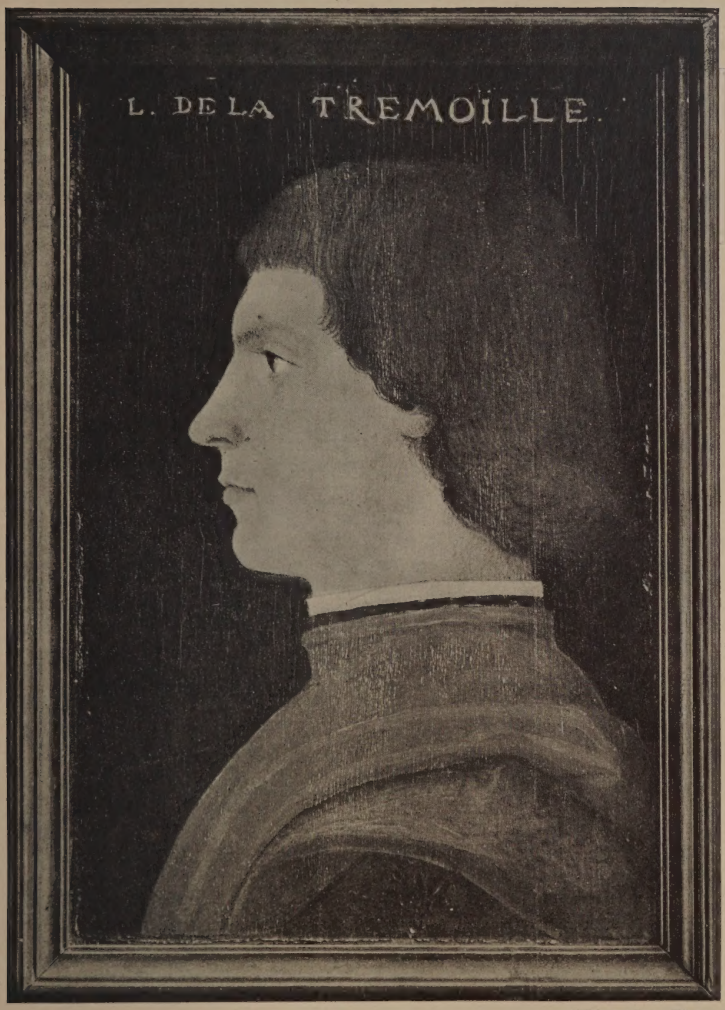
held out against the forces of the French crown. This check before Nantes induced Madame de Beaujeu, on March 11th, 1487, to send into the rebellious province another army, finely equipped, and supported by an excellent body of cavalry. This force she placed under La Trémoille's command. Count Louis was totally lacking in experience of military leadership. Yet by brilliant success, he fully justified the Regent's choice. Having taken the town of Fougères, Louis attacked the rebels in the open field, and, at St. Aubin-du-Cormier, charging in perfect order but with Frankish fury (*francisque fureur*), his troops routed the malcontents, taking Louis d'Orléans himself prisoner.

The victory of St. Aubin-du-Cormier ended the civil war. La Trémoille was now in high favour at court. Charles VIII., who had attained his majority and taken the government into his own hands, appointed Louis to be one of his chamberlains, and as a reward for his conduct of the Breton campaign bestowed upon his *cher et féal cousin* the captaincy of Fougères, with a pension of 2,000 *livres tournois*. Other offices and emoluments were to follow.

Two years later, when there was a prospect of war with England, the King appointed Louis lieutenant-general in the provinces of Poitou, Saintonge, Angoumois, Anjou, and in the marches of Brittany. But the war came to nothing, for Henry VII., like his predecessor, Edward IV., was bought off by the French King, and withdrew his army without doing more than lay siege to Boulogne.[1]

It was not in battle against England that La Trémoille was to win his laurels. By this time Charles's attention was being attracted elsewhere. The King had persuaded

[1] This agreement is known as the Treaty of Estaples, 1492.



[*Giraudon, Photo*

LOUIS II, COMTE DE LA TRÉMOILLE
From a portrait by Ghirlandajo, at Chantilly

himself that, through his grandmother, Marie d'Anjou, he had a right to the crown of Naples ; and there was coming upon him that passion for Italian conquest which for half a century was to obsess French sovereigns.

Among all the turbulent princes of Italy none was more ambitious than Ludovico Sforza of Milan, usually known as *Il Moro*, and one of the most striking figures of the Renaissance. In this year, 1492, Ludovico fanned Charles's ambition by sending to his court an embassy instructed to encourage the King to assert his claim to the Neapolitan kingdom.

What were the precise proposals made by the ambassadors is uncertain, but it is perfectly clear that their motive was to divert Charles in his proposed Italian expedition from any enterprise against the Duchy of Milan. Through his kinswoman, Valentine Visconti, daughter of the Duke of Milan, the King might possibly have laid claim to that duchy[1]; but on Milan Ludovico himself had designs. He had already usurped the government and thrust himself into the position of Regent for his nephew, the Duke Galeazzo, whom he had cast into prison. Now Galeazzo's father-in-law was the King of Naples, and Sforza's design was, by bringing King Charles against the Neapolitan kingdom, to prevent Naples from intervening on his son-in-law's behalf in Milan. The scheme was successful. And, when in 1494, Charles invaded Italy, it was against Naples alone that his arms were directed. Milan's turn was to come later.

In the previous year, if we may believe Jean Bouchet, La Trémoille had been despatched on a mission to Pope

[1] Eventually Charles VIII.'s cousin, and successor, Louis XII., who was directly descended from Valentine, did claim it.

Alexander VI., whose alliance the King eagerly coveted. No other authorities,[1] however, mention Louis as one of the ambassadors to Rome. The Count we know was appointed lieutenant-general in the King's army. And it seems likely that La Trémoille accompanied Charles when, in August, 1494, he crossed the Alps by the Mont Genèvre.

There is, likewise, every reason to believe that Count Louis participated in that *crescendo of marvels*, that march of the Northerners, tramping over the ancient Italian roads lying white in the autumn dust, from Pavia to Florence, from Florence to Rome, and from Rome to Naples.

That La Trémoille was with the King at the famous capture of Fort San Giovanni, which laid Naples at the feet of the French, there is no doubt. For to Count Louis redounded all the honours of that glorious day.

With the true instinct of a successful commander Louis was always careful for the physical condition of his soldiers. And on the morning of the attack on San Giovanni, at his own expense, he had the gunners served with wine. The cannonading lasted four hours, at the end of which time the Count, at the head of three companies, led the assault and was the first to set foot within the walls of the town. No sooner, at the head of his first company, had he planted his standard in the breach than it was seen to float from another which had been simultaneously effected by the second company. So great was the "Frankish fury" that in the space of an hour the town lay at the invader's mercy. Then, crossing the Liris and threatening the enemy on the flank and

[1] See Delaborde, "l'Expédition de Charles VIII.," 322, according to whom the ambassadors were d'Aubigny, Perron de Baschi, President Matheron, and Bidan, superintendent of finances.

rear, Charles compelled the Neapolitan army to retreat to Capua, while he, on February 22nd, entered Naples.

Of the spoils of the Neapolitan kingdom, which Charles distributed among the nobles of his army, La Trémoille appears to have received his share. But, once the plundering over, the French King and his generals were anxious to return to their native land. Like their country-woman of a later date, who, when she gazed on the blue waters of the Bay of Naples, longed for the mud of her natal Rue du Bac, Charles's nobles beneath those sunny skies longed to be back among the clouds and mists of their northern fatherland. Moreover, the King's allies were turning against him. Sforza, having secured for himself the Duchy of Milan,[1] was uniting in a league against the French, Venice, the Pope, the Emperor, Ferdinand of Arragon and Isabella of Castile.

Threatened with isolation in a hostile country, King Charles began to prepare for a return to his base of operations. In Naples he stayed only long enough to make a triumphal entry on May 12th, and to install the Comte de Montpensier, La Trémoille's brother-in-law, as his viceroy. Then, a week later, Louis with the King and his army turned his steps northward. The progress of the French was rapid; entering Rome, whence the Pope had fled, on June 1st, on the 13th they were at Sienna, on the 23rd at Pisa. At Poggibonsi, Charles gave audience to Savonarola, to whom he confessed, and from whose hands he received the Eucharist.

North of Pisa, at Sarzana, the invaders were confronted by a perplexing alternative: whether to take the coast road winding along the Gulf of Genoa or, marching north by way of Parma and Piacenza, to cross the Apennines

[1] Galeazzo had died in prison.

into the Lombard plain. Both roads were equally difficult for a large army encumbered with a train of heavy artillery : the coast road, as travellers by train from Genoa to Florence will recollect, is bounded on the one hand by the sea, and on the other by high mountains ; the inland road ran over the precipitous peaks and through the narrow gorges of the Apennines ; in both directions the King had good reason to believe a hostile army awaited him. Rather than fall into the enemy's hands between the sea and the mountains, Charles elected to cross the Apennines. And it was this decision which gave La Trémoille the opportunity of performing the most glorious of all his exploits. The ascent was made from Sarzana, not far from the famous marble quarries of Carrara, in that wild, picturesque country with which Andrew Wilson's landscapes have rendered us so familiar. But as they neared the higher peaks of the Apennines, covered with dense forests, the French commanders were met by an almost insuperable difficulty : how to convey over these precipitous mountains their train of fourteen huge cannon, each of which was usually drawn by thirty-five horses. In this dilemma the Swiss came to their rescue. These mercenaries by plundering a captured town in violation of the King's command had fallen into disfavour. Being anxious to reinstate themselves in their employer's good graces, they proposed to harness themselves to the guns and to drag them over the mountain. Their offer was eagerly accepted.

Now, while the master-gunner, Jean de la Grange, arranged the technicalities of this tremendous undertaking, it was La Trémoille who supervised its execution. And to him is chiefly due the perfect success of this

Herculean enterprise, the transport of fourteen enormous cannon over a pathless mountain in the scorching July sun. To prepare a way for the guns to pass, trees had to be cut down, rocks exploded, and the ground levelled. In all these works Count Louis personally took part. Clad only in doublet and hose, he worked in harness side by side with the Swiss, and with his own hand bore over the mountain helmets full of heavy cannon-balls. All the while with characteristic French patience and cheerfulness he was encouraging the soldiers by offering rewards to those who should first drag their gun to the summit, and now, as at San Giovanni, providing wine with which to quench the men's parching thirst. Thus encouraged by their heroic captain, and inspirited by the martial music of trumpet, fife and drum, inciting one another to new efforts by those curious cries which their descendants even to-day call over the Alpine valleys, the Swiss at length succeeded in dragging up to the top of the mountain all the fourteen cannon. Then came the descent, which was even more difficult than the ascent had been. For the guns were allowed to go down by their own weight; and the Swiss, roped to the backs of them to steady their descent, were in danger of being carried away by the impetus of the artillery. To La Trémoille's carefulness it was mainly due that during this dangerous business not one life was lost. And at the end of two days, the Count, burnt to a blackamoor by the sun, triumphantly told the King that his artillery train had crossed the mountains and lay safe on the boulder-strewn bank of the River Taro.

Charles was overjoyed; and to his indomitable general the words with which the King welcomed these tidings must have been highly gratifying: "To-day, my cousin,"

said the King, "at the risk of your own person, which you are very ready to hazard in the service of me and mine, you have accomplished more than Hannibal of Carthage, or Julius Cæsar. And I promise you that when I see you again in France such rewards shall be bestowed upon you as shall inspire others with a wish to serve me."

La Trémoille, with a noble knight's true modesty, replied: "Sire, I regret that my mind and body cannot better serve you; no other reward do I desire than your grace and goodwill." [1]

But the invaders had not yet overcome all their difficulties. And before they could cross the Alps they had to force their way through the enemy's army at Fornovo, where, on July 5th, La Trémoille commanded the rearguard, which appears to have borne the brunt of the fighting. Immediately on his return to France, Charles, remembering his promise, appointed his brilliant general High Chamberlain.[2]

Two years and a half later, on April 7th, 1498, the King died childless, leaving as his heir his cousin Louis, Duke of Orléans, whom La Trémoille had taken prisoner at St. Aubin-du-Cormier.

The accession to the throne of King Louis XII., the Count's sometime prisoner naturally filled La Trémoille with misgiving. But the new sovereign prudently announced that the King of France did not intend to avenge the wrongs of the Duke of Orléans. And with magnanimity, mingled no doubt with shrewdness, Louis not only confirmed La Trémoille in the possession

[1] Bouchet, 437.

[2] *Premier Chambellan.* For three generations La Trémoilles held this office: Georges under Charles VII., the Seigneur de Craon under Louis XI., and now Count Louis.

of those lands, offices and pensions which he had enjoyed under King Charles, but admitted him to his innermost councils.

In the year of his accession two problems perplexed the King, and in the solution of both he employed La Trémoille.

First, he was thinking of divorcing his wife, Jeanne de France, the plain, deformed little daughter of Louis XI. Jeanne's story is a sad one. She had been the victim of her father's ambition and revenge. Usually royal marriages are planned for the continuity of a house; the object of this one was the reverse, it was designed to extinguish the house of Orléans. At the time of Jeanne's marriage to Louis of Orléans the direct succession to the crown depended on the thinnest of threads, on the life of a six-year-old child, Louis XI.'s only son. The idea that an Orléans, a member of the bitterly hated younger branch of his family, should one day succeed him Louis could not tolerate. So to the head of the Orléans house, to his cousin Duke Louis, he gave to wife a princess whom he believed would have no children, his own poor little afflicted daughter, Jeanne.

Heartily as he detested the marriage, Orléans was not then in a position to resist. Like everyone else at Louis XI.'s court, he must needs bow to that monarch's will. Whether the union was ever more than nominal was later to be debated: the husband declared it was not, the wife asserted the contrary. At any rate, when, after twenty-two years of at least nominal marriage, Orléans ascended the throne as Louis XII., he determined to untie the knot which bound him to Jeanne.

Too close a blood relationship was the pretext the King pleaded when from the Pope, Alexander VI., he demanded

a bill nullifying his marriage. But in reality two other considerations, both of them perfectly legitimate according to the standards of that age, compelled the King to take a step which was much more usual in those days than now : first, he desired an heir ; second, he longed by marriage with his predecessor's widow, Anne, the wealthy and powerful Duchess of Brittany, to unite to the French crown that last of the great independent feudal fiefs.

The King, not unnaturally, hesitated to himself broach to Jeanne the subject of the dissolution of their union. But La Trémoille and the Queen had been friends ever since their childhood, when Jeanne was living at the castle of Linières, not far from Bommiers. So it was La Trémoille whom the King entrusted with the disagreeable task of making known to the Queen her royal husband's wishes. And Louis knew enough of his emissary to be sure that he would perform his graceless mission in the most graceful manner possible. The King was not mistaken. In his difficult interview with Jeanne, La Trémoille, showed himself at once diplomatic and delicate. He began by assuring the Queen that the King loved her beyond any woman in the world ; an assurance which was not unnecessary in face of the persistent neglect with which Louis had treated his wife throughout the long years of their marriage. Had the Queen been able to continue the royal line, said the ambassador, then her consort would have been only too happy to end his days in her sainted society.

Apparently Jeanne received her lord's proposal with the resignation of a Griseldis. But, as La Trémoille was leaving her, she bade him entreat the King to take counsel and not to marry from motives of passion, of ambition, or of avarice.

But Jeanne's warning was too late a day. Already, as we have seen, Louis' mind was made up ; already the machinery for the dissolution of his marriage had been set working, and the King and the Pope had struck a bargain : in return for a papal bull appointing a commission to inquire into the validity of the royal union, the Pope's son, Cæsare Borgia, was to receive a rich wife, Charlotte d'Albret, with the fat lands of the duchy of Valentinois.[1]

To save appearances a papal inquiry was necessary. It opened at Troyes, on August 10th, 1498, in the house of the Dean of the Chapter. There, after much hesitation and anguish of heart, Madame Jeanne de France, the daughter and wife of kings, made up her mind to appear in order to contest Louis' assertion that their marriage had never been consummated.

Nothing but a strong sense of religious duty could have induced the timid Jeanne, who, in her father's presence, out of sheer shyness, used to shrink behind her governess, to come forth from her retirement into the ignominous publicity of a court of law. But to her marriage was a sacrament, and to preserve its sanctity she consented even to reveal the tender hidden things of her inmost heart.

Yet Jeanne's evidence, torn from her at the cost of so much suffering, was of no avail. The commission sat for four months, but without waiting for its decision the Pope signed the dispensation for Louis' marriage with Anne of Brittany. In that month of August the King, with the Duchess and La Trémoille, was at Etampes, signing, with Count Louis as guarantor and witness, a

[1] The marriage was celebrated at Blois in 1499 ; and it was the daughter of Cæsare and Charlotte whom La Trémoille, after Gabrielle's death, married for his second wife.

solemn promise to marry Anne within a year or to surrender to her the Breton towns of Nantes and Fougères, of which La Trémoille was captain.

Anne, for her part, by virtue of a clause in her marriage contract with Charles VIII., which obliged her to marry the King of France, his successor, promised in writing to marry Louis as soon as the papal inquiry should be completed. Before the close of the year the marriage took place. And Jeanne retired to her appanage at Berry, where six years later she died in such odour of sanctity that some years later she was beatified.

For his son's marriage with Charlotte d'Albret the Pope had paid a further price in promising his support to King Louis in the expedition he was then preparing against the Duchy of Milan. For Louis XII. shared his predecessor's passion for Italian conquest. On his accession, Louis had assumed the titles of Duke of Milan and King of Sicily. But, as grandson of the Milanese princess, Valentine Visconti, it was Milan rather than Naples that first attracted his ambition.

Therefore, in 1499, the year after his accession, having isolated his prey by a formidable network of alliances, including the Pope, the King of England, the King and Queen of Spain, Scotland, Portugal, Venice, Hungary, Bohemia, Switzerland and even the Empire, Louis despatched an expedition against Milan under the leadership of Trivulzio, a Milanese exile. La Trémoille would appear to have been a more natural commander. But it now became obvious that there was some influence at court working against him. It cannot have been the King's influence, for Louis XII., as we have seen, had completely taken his sometime captor into his confidence. More probably it was the Queen's malevolence that caused

Count Louis to be passed over, for the cold, vindictive Anne of Brittany had never forgiven him for having in earlier days besieged her good Breton towns and overrun her duchy. Not under La Trémoille, therefore, but under Trivulzio, the French army crossed the Alps. Yet, although La Trémoille did not take part in this expedition, we must follow it briefly in order to understand the Count's subsequent doings.

Against the invading force of the French King, leagued with all the great Continental powers, the Duke of Milan felt he had no possible chance. He therefore decided to flee from his duchy, and, while raising a formidable army of mercenaries, to endeavour to break up the league of his enemies. The first member he succeeded in detaching was the Emperor Maximilian. Meanwhile, in September, 1499, Trivulzio and the French, having overrun the greater part of the Milanese, were able to enter the city and buy out the Duke's garrison from the citadel. Towards the end of the month King Louis himself crossed the Alps to take possession of his conquest, and on October 6th made his solemn entry into Milan. Then, after spending a month in regulating the affairs of the duchy, he returned to France, leaving Trivulzio in supreme command.

But the Italian's arrogance was so overbearing and his exactions so heavy, that the Milanese rose in revolt, and on February 3rd, 1500, Trivulzio, hearing that the fugitive Duke with an army of Swiss mercenaries was approaching the city, deemed it wise to withdraw with his army, leaving, however, a French garrison in the citadel. On February 5th, Sforza re-entered Milan, greeted by enthusiastic cries of " Moro, Moro." But all his efforts to capture the citadel were unavailing ; so he must needs content himself with taking the neighbouring town of Vigevano,

whence he advanced to Novara. There, on March 21st, he compelled the French to capitulate.

By this time Trivulzio had made himself cordially disliked and distrusted by his companions in arms. And Louis was driven to the conclusion that, unless his Italian army were to be utterly routed, he must appoint a new and trusted general. No one was better fitted for such a responsible post than La Trémoille, and, disregarding all remonstrances, it was La Trémoille whom the King now chose to lead his reinforcements into Italy, and to join Trivulzio in command.

On March 26th, 1500, with 500 men-at-arms and an excellent train of artillery, Count Louis joined hands with Trivulzio at Mortara, where, a few days later, he was further reinforced by 14,000 Swiss, bringing the number of his troops up to 30,000.

In the almost incredibly brief interval of nine days, the Count converted Trivulzio's discontented and mutinous army into the finest force ever commanded by a French general for more than a century.[1] Preceded by a banner, on which were painted a whip, a torch and a blood-stained sword, at the head of his lordly host La Trémoille, on April 5th, set forth for Novara.

Before this town, on the banks of the Sesia, the Duke of Milan was encamped with a force in numbers slightly superior to that of his adversary, but in *morale* vastly inferior. For the Duke's army, consisting of Swiss, Germans, Burgundians and Italians, all clamouring for arrears of pay, was disunited and discontented.

On the day after their departure from Mortara, La Trémoille and his men took up their position over against Sforza before Novara. For the two following days there

[1] Auton, "Chroniques," ed. Maulde la Clavière, 241 *et seq.*

was indecisive skirmishing. Meanwhile the troops on both sides, many of whom were compatriots, were fraternising. From their countrymen in the Count's service, the Duke's Burgundians, Swiss and Italians were learning that against so excellently organised a force Sforza's disintegrated host had not the remotest chance of victory. Wherefore, during the night of April 7th, vast bodies of the Duke's soldiers slipped off, some to take refuge within the walls of the town, others to cross the Sesia and return to their native land. Consequently, when the Duke of Milan awoke in the morning it was to find that a great part of his army had melted away.

On that day, which was April 8th, the French closely invested Novara. And then Sforza's Swiss, seeing their cause to be hopeless, opened negotiations with La Trémoille, demanding a safe conduct to their native land. But before the French general would accede to their request he demanded the Duke's surrender. Even to these mercenaries so open an act of treachery was odious. At first they hesitated ; and it was only after a whole day's bargaining that, on the 9th, they agreed not to resist their leader's capture, if, during their retreat, he should be discovered in their ranks.

The events which followed are somewhat obscure. But it appears that La Trémoille, determined not to permit so valuable a prize to escape him, ordered the Swiss, as they withdrew, to defile singly beneath a pike held over their heads by the French soldiers. Seeing that some thousands of Swiss soldiers still remained in Novara, it may be imagined that the process was a somewhat lengthy one. After it had lasted three hours, there passed beneath the pike one with a careworn look and furtive glance, whose marked features, colossal height and

distinguished bearing were unmistakable—the Duke of Milan was recognised and arrested.[1]

Thus, for a second time within but a few years, had it fallen to La Trémoille's lot to capture the leader of a hostile army. And in the King's judgment Novara must surely have atoned for St. Aubin-du-Cormier.

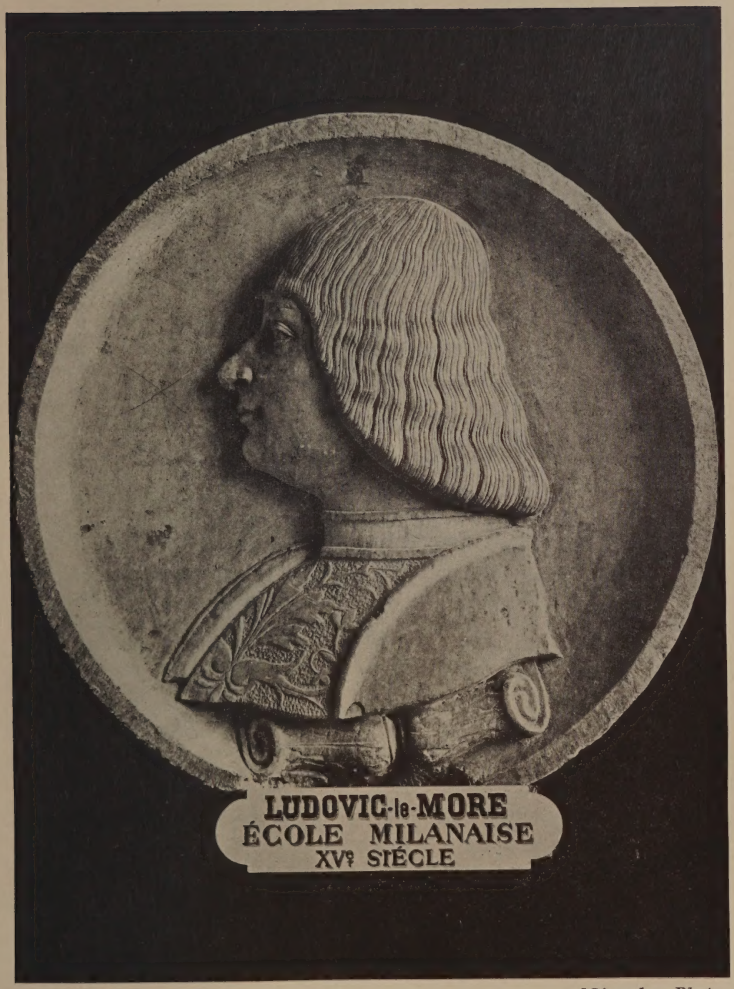
It was Count Louis himself who wrote a long letter to the King announcing the Duke of Milan's capture. Louis received the news at Lyons early one morning, before he was up. And at once he hastened to announce it to the Queen. "Madame," he cried, on entering Anne's chamber, "will you believe it, La Trémoille has taken Louis Sforza!" But Anne refused to believe it, until Louis repeatedly assured her that it was certain, and that a sovereign of France never had a better or more loyal servant, or one more successful in his undertakings.

Well might the King of France rejoice, for among all his enemies Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, was the most formidable.

The husband of Beatrice d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara's brilliant and graceful daughter, who happily did not live to see her husband's ruin, Sforza was the patron of literature and of art. To the brutal virility of a condottieri he united the taste and the learning of a polished gentleman and a refined scholar.

There are those who consider that because Sforza brought the French into Italy he was a traitor to his native land. But such detractors forget that in those days Italy was but a geographical expression, that her numerous independent states were separate entities, and

[1] Bouchet says he was wearing the habit of a Franciscan friar: that he should have donned such a disguise is improbable, for it would only have rendered his striking personality more recognisable.



[*Giraudon, Photo*

From a portrait of the Milanese School now in the Louvre

that when Sforza invited Charles VIII. to cross the Alps and attack Naples, he was merely opposing a hostile power. That the Duke of Milan was a usurper who had ousted his nephew, Galeazzo, from power no one can deny. And for this treachery La Trémoille's captive paid the penalty to the uttermost in long years of imprisonment and a miserable death in a foreign dungeon.

Transported with joy at his enemy's capture, Louis wrote no less than three letters to La Trémoille, urging him to lose no time in sending his prisoner to France, and to neglect no precaution to prevent his escaping on the road. "For I have a marvellous desire to see him over here . . . and I shall never be at ease until I behold Ludovico on this side the mountains,"[1] wrote Louis from Lyons.

As soon as the King's commands were received, Sforza, who for the time being had been confined in the citadel of Novara, was placed in an iron cage covered with wood and taken first to Lyons that the King might behold his fallen foe, and thence to the castle of Lys-Saint-Georges in Berry, where he died eight years afterwards.[2]

Having conquered Milan, King Louis next proceeded against Naples. And in the plans made for the conquest of the Neapolitan kingdom, La Trémoille was treated just as he had been when the conquest of Milan had been undertaken. Now again he found himself passed over and replaced by Italians. This time the Queen's influence is perfectly obvious. There is no doubt that it was at her suggestion that the King detained Count

[1] "Chartier de Thouars," 32 and 33.

[2] There appears to be no authority for the tradition that he died in the château of Loches in Touraine.

Louis at home to guard the coast of Anne's duchy[1] against a possible English invasion.

" At the instance of our very dear and greatly beloved companion " (*notre très chère et très aimée compaigne*), so runs the official document of La Trémoille's nomination,[2] the King committed to his loyal servant's charge watch and ward over the Breton coasts in addition to the defence of those of Guyenne which he already exercised.

But now again, as during the Milanese conquest, the Italian commanders having proved incompetent, the King was glad to supersede them by Frenchmen, one of whom was La Trémoille.

It was in August, 1503, that for the third time Count Louis crossed the Alps into Italy. On the 18th of the month, the Pope, Alexander Borgia, died. And King Louis, hoping to secure the election to the papal chair of his minister, La Trémoille's uncle, Georges d'Amboise, and thinking that the presence of a French army near Rome might further this design, ordered the Count to linger round the Holy City instead of marching on Naples.

La Trémoille had not been well when he left France, and the effect of the Italian heat of those summer months, aggravated, perhaps, by some disappointment at being withheld from active service, was not to improve his health. He grew rapidly worse until his doctor, despairing of his life, demanded his recall. Louis replaced the Count by his old enemy at Fornavo, Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, who, like many another Italian general in those wars, had gone over to the French. Gonzaga took the command, and La Trémoille regretfully returned to France.

[1] The Queen's duchy of Brittany was not formally united to the crown until after her death.

[2] " Les La Trémoille pendant cinq siècles," II. 128 129

Their general's illness was only the beginning of the French misfortunes. Gonzaga soon became unpopular with the troops and resigned, leaving the army leaderless, disunited and undisciplined, to be completely routed by the Spanish general, Gonzala.[1]

Meanwhile, La Trémoille was in for a year's serious illness. The King grieved sorely over his indisposition, for the Count was one of the few at court who were ever ready to serve their sovereign without clamouring for a reward. Despite his disinterestedness, however, he was not to go entirely unrecompensed. On his recovery, the King appointed him governor of the rich province of Burgundy. This was a " fine estate and one eagerly desired by all good people." Yet the office was far from being a sinecure ; for as a frontier province Burgundy was constantly open to attack. The Mayor of Dijon welcoming the new Governor into his capital did not conceal how much was expected from him. The Burgundians looked to La Trémoille, he said, and to the renown of his victories to serve them as a rampart against the sudden movements of the industrious Flemings, the pertinacious Hainaulters, the pillaging Swiss, the greedy Germans, and all those who were envious of the frugality and the wealth of these bountifully gifted people. Burgundy was, indeed, the wealthiest of French provinces, and on that account there were few French nobles who could have been trusted to govern it. But La Trémoille, being totally devoid of avarice, appears to have kept his hands immaculate, " uncorrupted," says Bouchet, " by gifts of gold or silver."

Despite the cares of his new office, Louis still required the Count's services in Italy. And in 1507 we find him

[1] On the Garigliano, December, 1503.

accompanying the King to suppress a revolt of Genoa against French rule. This done the King proceeded to Milan, and thither went with him three La Trémoilles, Count Louis, his son, Charles, Prince of Talmond, and his brother, Jean.

Jean was the first of the La Trémoille cardinals. Having entered the Church in early years he rose rapidly, chiefly through his brother's influence, to be Bishop of Poitiers and Archbishop of Auch. He was a typical prince of the Church, and as great a pluralist as our own Cardinal Wolsey, for in addition to his bishopric and archbishopric he enjoyed the revenues of half the bishopric of Agen, of eight abbeys and of one priory. With an income of 50,000 *livres* he lived in great state with fifty horses in the stable, a magnificent train of falcons, and a master falconer, who was one of the most famous in his day and generation.

Jean had been made a Cardinal by Julius II. in 1506. And in this year, 1507, he was on his way to Rome to do homage to the Pope. But at Milan he was stricken with fever and died. His body, having temporarily rested in a Franciscan church of the city where the Cardinal had been accustomed to hear mass, was eventually taken to France and buried at Thouars, in the church of Notre Dame.

Twice again during the reign of Louis XII. was Count Louis to visit Italy, in 1509 and in 1513. In the former year the Count and his son, the Prince de Talmond, distinguished themselves at Agnadello, where the King defeated the Venetians. In 1513, once again in joint command with Trivulzio, La Trémoille led an unfortunate expedition against the members of the newly-formed Holy League. By a curious coincidence the chief

engagement was fought on the scene of the Count's famous capture of Ludovico Sforza, outside the walls of Novara. But now the fortunes of war were reversed, and La Trémoille suffered defeat at the hands of the Swiss, whom formerly he had conquered. Having lost all their artillery and stores, Louis and his fellow commander were compelled to retreat hastily into France by the passes of Susa and Mont Cenis.[1]

In the previous year the French had lost Milan, and the last of King Louis' Italian campaigns had been fought. Not that he had relinquished his designs on Milan or on Naples, for he devoted the remainder of his reign to preparing a formidable expedition, the undertaking of which death compelled him to leave to his successor.

After his defeat at Novara, La Trémoille hastened to his province of Burgundy, which had already been invaded by the victorious Swiss. Strengthened by imperial support, they were investing Dijon with an army of 60,000. Count Louis sent an urgent request to the King for reinforcements. But, as the English were at that time invading France on the north, no army was forthcoming, and La Trémoille was forced to buy off the invaders with a promise of 400,000 crowns.[2]

The news of this humiliating treaty was a great blow to the King, who was at first inclined to severely censure its author; but, when it was represented to him what enormous odds were against his general, his common sense vanquished his chagrin and La Trémoille was forgiven.

[1] Bouchet exonerates his hero from any blame in this reverse, saying that the defeat resulted from Trivulzio's refusal to follow his colleague's advice.

[2] See Brantôme "Les Grands Capitaines Français," ed. Lalanne, II., 393 *et seq.*

In the following year his old enemy, Queen Anne, having died, the Count, with a train of other distinguished knights rode out of Abbeville to meet his sovereign's bride, Mary Tudor, and to escort her to her husband. The King survived his third marriage but a few months. In January, 1515, he died, leaving his throne and his Italian quarrels to his kinsman, Francis of Angoulême, Duke of Valois.

One of the first acts of King Francis was to confirm La Trémoille in the possession of all his estates and offices. At the court of the new King, says Michelet, the veteran commanders, La Trémoille and Trivulzio, were like two pieces of old furniture which had served their turn.[1] Yet Francis did not despise his "old furniture." And, when a few months after his succession, in August, 1515, in pursuance of his predecessor's design, he led over the Alps an army more powerful than any yet raised in the wars, La Trémoille went with him. With the old Count were his son, Charles Prince de Talmond, and his grandson, Francis, who was but a boy of thirteen.

King Francis was obviously bent on honouring the La Trémoilles, for it was to the wardship of his namesake, this boy of thirteen, that the King committed the first distinguished prisoner taken in the campaign, Prospero Colonna, whom Francis de La Trémoille conducted right across France to his Poitevin prison in the castle of Montègu.[2]

The boy's father and grandfather meanwhile were with the French army at Novara avenging Count Louis' defeat of two years earlier, and winning back the lost

[1] Michelet, "Hist. de France an Seizième Siècle," Bk. I., Chap. XIII.
[2] Brantôme "Œuvres Completes" (ed. Lalanne), V. 146.

artillery. Then the French encamped by the Roman road, ten miles from Milan city, close to the village of Marignano.

There, on the afternoon of September 13th, as King Francis was in his tent trying on a new suit of German armour, he heard that the enemy's Swiss mercenaries had come out of Milan, and that in battle array some 30,000 strong they were rapidly advancing to the attack.

Of the two days' battle which followed accounts vary. During the hours of darkness which suspended the fighting, while their adversaries were refreshed by food and drink from Milan, the hungry French lay all night under arms. Having called for a glass of water, the young King found it mingled with gore. Thirsty, he retired to his rest beneath a gun-carriage, having first extinguished his fire so that unseen he might observe what his men were doing. Close beside him lay La Trémoille. The Prince de Talmond was in another part of the camp with his cousin, Constable Bourbon.

With early dawn the struggle was renewed. It was, as Trivulzio called it, " a battle of giants," and long did the issue tremble in the balance. The tide turned in favour of the French when Alviano, the general of the Venetian Republic, the only Italian ally of France, came up with a body of horse. Alviano's arrival, like that of Blücher at Waterloo, took the heart out of the enemy. Soon afterwards they retreated, leaving, so it is said, no less than half their number, 15,000, on the field.

The French, too, had lost heavily. And Count Louis' son, Charles, Prince de Talmond, lay dying, wounded in sixty-two parts of the body.[1]

[1] We quote Bouchet.

It was the young King who took upon himself the terrible task of breaking to the Count that he must not hope for his son's recovery. Charles died thirty-six hours after the battle.

Though grieving deeply over the death of his only son, La Trémoille, with characteristic devotion to duty, remained with the army. To the care of his grandson's tutor, Regnaud de Moussy, he committed his son's body. Slowly and pompously it was conveyed through France to Thouars to its last resting-place in the church of Notre Dame by the side of Cardinal Jean.

A messenger from her husband had borne to Gabrielle de Bourbon the sad tidings of her son's death. Despite the spiritual consolations of her nephew, the Bishop of Poitiers, who was with her at the time, Gabrielle was unable to practise those counsels of resignation she sent to her husband, and, sinking beneath the blow, she died of grief in the following year.

Thus there passed away one of the finest types of old French feminity. Bouchet, whose literary tastes made him her favourite companion, describes her as a woman of few words, temperate,[1] grave, magnanimous, and above all things, pious. Dignified and distant in public, among the ladies and gentlemen of her household, and those she knew well, she was always gracious and familiar, ready with kind words and wise counsel, but disliking scandalous and licentious talk.

The death of the Prince de Talmond left as heir to the La Trémoille estates the young Francis, whose mother, Louise de Coëtivy, was first cousin to the King of

[1] "Elle se contentoit de peu de viandes aux heures accoutumées."

France.[1] The uncertain life of a boy of thirteen was but a slender thread on which to hang the hope of the perpetuation of the La Trémoille line. And it may have been primarily for the purpose of furnishing his family with another heir that Count Louis, despite his deep grief at Gabrielle's death, only a year afterwards took to himself another wife, Louise d'Albret, Duchess of Valentinois and only child of Cæsare Borgia and Charlotte d'Albret.[2] While the lately disconsolate widower was fifty-seven, his bride was but a girl of seventeen. The Count's friends expressed their amazement at his choosing a successor to the highly virtuous Gabrielle de Bourbon from the decadent Borgia house. Louis is said to have made the astounding reply, that it was precisely because Louise came of a stock the virtue of whose women had never been questioned, that he had chosen her. If tradition speak true, there was certainly no question about the virtue of the Borgia women: for one cannot question what does not exist. But perhaps that was hardly the Count's meaning. Louis may have been closing his eyes to the Borgia family history, and thinking only of the maternal side of his wife's house, of the d'Albret women, who had on the whole, been beyond reproach.

Both Louise's parents were dead at the time of her wedding. And apparently it was by the King's mother,

[1] John of Angoulême.

Charles *m.* Louise of Savoy. — Francis I.

Joan *m.* Charles de Coëtivy, Comte de Taillebourg. — Louise de Coëtivy *m.* Charles de la Trémoille. — Francis de la Trémoille.

[2] See *ante*, 69 and note.

Louise de Savoie, of whom Mdlle. d'Albret was a lady-in-waiting, that the marriage was arranged. After Gabrielle's death, Count Louis had been much at court, losing large sums of money at games of chance, and it may have been while playing at *trictrac* or *oie* that Madame de Savoie suggested to the Count that he might fill his rapidly emptying purse, and at the same time secure the continuation of his house, by espousing the wealthy young Duchess of Valentinois.

Marriages were just then running in Louis' mind. And in order to make doubly secure the La Trémoille succession, in this same year, 1517, he betrothed his niece, Jacqueline, daughter of his brother, Georges, Seigneur de Jonvelle, to the friend of the King's boyhood, Anne de Montmorency, who later as Constable of France was to be one of the century's most prominent figures. In the event of the Count and his brother dying without male heirs, Montmorency was to inherit the La Trémoille title and possessions. But Jacqueline was not yet of a marriageable age, and when she became old enough, Montmorency had changed his mind, so this wedding never took place.

For the first few years after his second marriage Louis' sword rested in the scabbard. With three young Kings on the three greatest thrones of Europe, Henry VIII. in England, Charles in Spain, Francis in France, Christendom was *en fête*, and jest and laughter, hunting and dancing were the order of the day. The French court was the gayest of all; and the Spanish ambassadors, following the King from château to château, complained that they could never obtain an audience from the pleasure-loving monarch: in the evening he was too busy with banquet, concert and dance; in the early morning

too sleepy, and no sooner up and awake than off to the greenwood with the hunt.

Every political event was eagerly used as an excuse for more festivity. In December and January, 1518—1519, the court was at Paris entertaining with jousts, banquets, balls and hunting parties four English ambassadors, the Lord Chamberlain, the Prior of St. John's, the Captain of Guisnes, and the Bishop of Ely.[1] On December 23rd, the King offered these ambassadors one of the most magnificent royal banquets recorded in history. It was given in the great court of the Bastille, which for the purpose was roofed with sail-cloth and lined within by pleached box, from which hung oranges and other fruits. The feast was followed by a dance, and in the small hours of the morning the entertainment closed with an elaborate collation of sweetmeats served by court ladies.

On January 1st La Trémoille followed suit, and presented the ambassadors with a sumptuous repast in his Hôtel des Creneaux.[2] According to the family records, this was a truly Gargantuan feast. The bill, preserved for us by the piety or admiration of the host's descendants, spreads itself over nine royal octavo pages. Every variety of edible fish, flesh and fowl seems to have been there. The board groaned beneath 25 lbs. of beef, twenty-three fat capons, eight pigs, twelve dozen larks, seventy-one pigeons, twelve large hams, five salmon, twenty-four eels, 1,100 herrings, 800 oysters, snails, of which we hope the English guests did not partake, and all manner of other fish. The venison the King himself provided. Of the salad let modern housewives take note : there were

[1] "Cal. St. P. Ven. II." (1509—1519), 480, 482, 485 *et seq.*

[2] Probably the magnificent mansion he had recently built on the outskirts of the Latin quarter. It was afterwards known as the Hôtel de La Trémoille. See *post*, 274, n. 5.

eighteen dishes of it, arranged artistically in the form of flowers and foliage, and its ingredients were endive, beetroot and olives. Fruits and sweetmeats were not lacking, and the long list of spices used in the cooking would excite envy in the breast of any votary of the culinary art. The King lent silver plate, and so did several of the nobles. Twenty-six lbs. of candles illuminated the feast, the total cost of which amounted to 676 *livres tournois*.

In La Trémoille's recently replenished purse another big hole was made in the following year, when the Count and his grandson accompanied King Francis to that culminating glory of these festive years, the Field of the Cloth of Gold. It was, as Michelet calls it, " a duel of expenditure," for the nobles of England and France, each nation vying with the other in magnificence, sold and mortgaged castles and lands to procure for the adorning of themselves and their retainers gold and silver, jewels, satins and velvets. In such grandeur La Trémoille could not be behind the rest. And for his own and his grandson's accoutring no doubt his bride's fortune proved useful.

From the family accounts we learn that it was to his apothecary, Jean Billard, that Louis entrusted the care of his equipment, the ordering of cloaks in the Spanish mode fashioned out of " cloth of velvet," a robe of violet velvet and sundry other garments, as well as clothes for the men-at-arms and coverings for their horses, and the painting of the Count's standard, with three banners for trumpeters and cornets to boot.

Thus equipped, we may be sure that old Louis and young Francis de La Trémoille ruffled it well among the glittering splendours of the golden field. And there it may have

been that for the young Prince of Talmond was arranged that illustrious marriage with the heiress of the house of Laval, which was celebrated in the following year.

The Prince's grandmother had been a princess of the royal Bourbon house, his mother first cousin to the King, and now the Prince himself was to marry a King's granddaughter. The grandfather of his Breton bride, Anne de Laval, was Frederick of Arragon, King of Naples. And through their Neapolitan ancestors we shall find Anne de Laval's La Trémoille descendants calling themselves Princes of Tarente or Taranto, and for two centuries claiming the Neapolitan crown.[1]

With the Field of the Cloth of Gold the fat years of feasting came to an end. In the lean years which followed the veteran Count Louis rendered valiant service to France. The Kings who had so cordially embraced at Ardres were soon falling out. An English army invaded the north, while the Emperor attacked France in the south. Had it not been for La Trémoille's skilful conduct of the northern campaign, the English might have marched on Paris. But, though so badly provided with troops that, as soon as he had effectually defended one stronghold he must needs move his men to secure the next, Count Louis succeeded in driving back the English, not, however, before they had approached to within twenty miles of Paris.

This was in the year 1422, just after Bourbon, Constable of France, Count Louis' nephew had inflicted a crushing blow on his country by deserting to the enemy.

In the following year we find Louis enjoying a brief interval of repose and relaxation at court, where on July 12th he paid four *livres* of Tours to the King's

[1] See *post*, 155 and n. 2 and 289 and n. 1.

cornets and trumpeters in acknowledgment of "the pastime which they had that day afforded him."

After spending some months in Burgundy defending his province against imperial attack, Louis joined his King near Avignon in October, 1524, and then for the eighth[1] and last time crossed the Alps into Italy to take part in the famous Pavia campaign.

The object of this expedition was the reconquest of Milan. Making straight for this city, Francis, although he failed to capture the citadel, succeeded in taking the town and driving out the imperial generals Bourbon, Pescara and Charles de Lannoy. The two latter entrenched themselves in the neighbouring town of Lodi, while Bourbon crossed the Alps to raise reinforcements in Switzerland and Germany.

Then the King made a fatal mistake, which was to cost him his liberty and La Trémoille his life. Instead of immediately besieging the enemy in Lodi, Francis wasted the winter months in a useless siege of Pavia, and, filled with vain confidence by his victory at Milan, disastrously weakened his army by detaching a large part of it under the Duke of Albany for the conquest of Naples.

December and January, the last months of his life, La Trémoille passed in the great camp which the French constructed round Pavia. It was like a huge town, with a population of merchants, victuallers and women as well as soldiers, amounting to no less than 70,000 souls.

The King, given up to gaiety and all the soft voluptuousness of his beloved Italy, was residing in the neighbouring château of Mirabello. But his generals were

[1] The dates of Count Louis' Italian campaigns are 1494, 1500, 1503, 1507, 1509, 1513, 1515, 1524—1525.

not so comfortably quartered, and La Trémoille may have been one of those who was reduced to go and warm his hands at his royal master's fire.

Meanwhile the imperial forces were concentrating at Lodi. Bourbon had arrived with reinforcements, and late in January the imperial commanders decided to come to the relief of the inhabitants of Pavia, who were reduced to great straits. On January 24th the imperialists left Lodi, and a week later took up their position within a mile of the French outposts before Pavia. The French were now as if besieged between Pavia on the one hand, and the relieving force on the other. Some weeks were occupied in skirmishing between the two armies. But on February 25th, the imperialists having during the night obtained possession of the park of Mirabello, the battle was engaged.

Conflicting accounts render it difficult to ascertain what actually took place at Pavia. But concerning the chief incident of the battle, there is no doubt: the King, accompanied by La Trémoille, threw himself so rashly upon his enemies that his infantry found it impossible to follow. Francis and the gentlemen of his household were isolated.

La Trémoille, ever in the thickest of the *mêlée*, was wounded in the face beneath the eye; and his horse, likewise wounded, was about to fall beneath him, when a certain Jacques de la Brosse, who had once been the Count's page, offered Louis his horse. Then, remounted, La Trémoille, despite his wound, hastened to his sovereign's side, but only to fall, disabled by an arquebus shot, and this time mortally wounded.

Close at hand at this moment was La Trémoille's grandson, Francis, who, to avenge his grandsire's death,

throwing himself into the heart of the battle, was surrounded by foes on every hand, and taken prisoner.

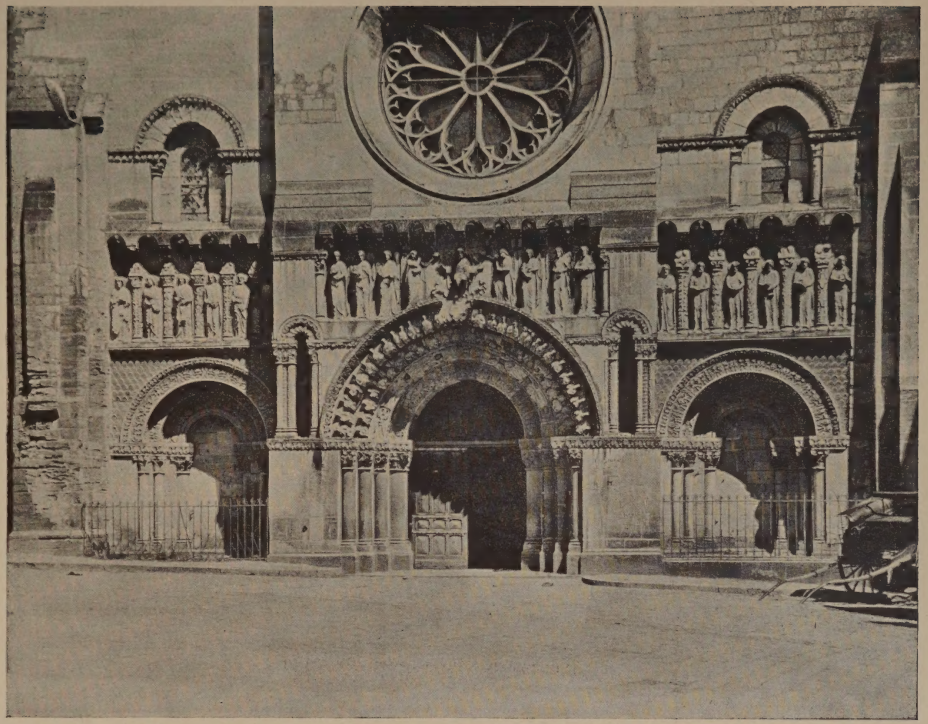
A similar fate had overtaken the King himself, while many of La Trémoille's companions-in-arms lay with him dead upon the battlefield.

Like most warriors, Count Louis had looked forward to death in action. But he who had so often seen the dead bodies of wounded generals lying defaced and unrecognisable had conceived a curious design for diverting from himself a fate so undesirable; he had told his friends that in the case of his being killed in battle his body might be identified by the unusual length of the nail of his big toe on the right foot, and Bouchet relates that it was by this mark that the Count's body was recognised. It was borne into one of the churches of Pavia. There it remained until, embalmed with myrrh and aloes, and enclosed in a coffin, it was conveyed in great pomp and magnificence from Italy into France, and by way of Lyons, Loudun, and Ile Bouchard to Thouars, where in the church of Notre Dame it found its last resting-place in a gorgeous tomb by the side of Gabrielle de Bourbon.

On the day of Louis' funeral at Thouars, tidings reached the castle that the new Count Francis had returned to Lyons, having paid his ransom of no less than 9,000 crowns to his three captors, Francesco di Miranda, Alvaro di Cartagena and Andrea di Malo.

Exorbitant as was the amount of this ransom, Francis was well able to pay it; for, as we have seen, his wife had brought him a huge fortune. The new Count is said to have been the wealthiest of all the La Trémoilles.

Without playing so important a part in public affairs as his grandfather, Count Francis served the King faith-



FAÇADE OF THE CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME AT THOUARS

fully in his Italian wars. But it is chiefly as a provincial administrator that he is remembered. As lieutenant-general of Poitou, Saintonge and Aunis, he protected agriculture. Like his great-grandfather, the first Louis, he was an ideal country gentleman, and he died peacefully in his bed, in his château of Thouars, at the comparatively early age of forty.

Two years before his death he had been charged by the King to welcome to Poitiers the Emperor Charles V. on his progress through France.

The eldest of his eleven children, a third Louis, succeeded to his domains, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, threw himself heartily into the struggle between Catholics and Protestants.

CHAPTER V

THE LA TRÉMOILLES AND THE WARS OF RELIGION

LOUIS III., VICOMTE AND THEN DUC DE THOUARS, 1522—1577.
CLAUDE, DUC DE THOUARS, 1566—1604.
CHARLOTTE DE LA TRÉMOILLE, PRINCESSE DE CONDÉ, 1568—1629.
HER SON, HENRI DE BOURBON, PRINCE DE CONDÉ, 1588—1646.

THE French Wars of Religion followed hard upon the conclusion of the Italian campaigns. When the safety-valve for baronial turbulence afforded by foreign warfare was closed, then the nobles turned against each other at home. For half a century they wasted France in a civil war, which was fought in the name of religion, but was nothing more nor less than a struggle between rival political factions.

In this conflict the La Trémoilles played an important part, fighting first on the Catholic side, and then for a generation espousing the Protestant cause.

Louis III.,[1] eldest son of Francis de La Trémoille, having served in the Catholic army during the early years of the civil war, was, in 1576, appointed lieutenant-general of a Poitevin army raised to fight against the Protestant leader, the Comte de Lude. Only for a few months, however, did La Trémoille occupy this prominent post ; for in the following year, while besieging the strong-

[1] 1522—1577. In 1550 he was sent to England as one of the hostages for the execution of the Treaty of Boulogne.

hold of Melle, he was stricken with an illness which proved fatal on the very day of the town's surrender.[1]

Louis was one of the richest of the La Trémoilles. Partly on this account, but also as a reward for his services to the crown, Charles IX. had converted the viscounty of Thouars into a duchy,[2] with the unusual proviso, that in default of heirs male it was to descend through the female line. In 1594 Louis had married Jeanne de Montmorency, daughter of the great Constable Anne. By her he left two children, a son Claude, born in 1566, and a daughter Charlotte, two years younger.

In the province of Poitou, and especially in the town of Thouars, during Louis' lifetime, Protestantism had been making rapid progress. Berthre de Bournisseaux, a Catholic historian,[3] relates that a whole convent of nuns had been converted and conducted by their abbess to Geneva, there to publicly abjure the religion of their fathers. Meanwhile, their fellow-converts at home were plundering churches, breaking sacred vases, and throwing to the four winds all the holy relics they could lay hands on. Ascending the pulpit of the church of Notre Dame, at Thouars (again we cite the Catholic historian), an ex-Carmelite, united in unholy wedlock to a woman whose husband was still alive, uttered such terrible blasphemies that the scandalised congregation rose, dragged him from the church and straightway hanged him in the street outside.[4]

All these disorders Duke Louis seems to have regarded with a serenity unworthy of so stalwart a defender of the faith. It was not until the Huguenots had introduced

[1] March 25th, 1577.
[2] By letters patent, registered October 21st, 1563.
[3] "Hist. de la Ville de Thouars" (1824), 173 *et seq.*
[4] September 30th, 1561.

into Thouars for their protection a company of 500 foot soldiers, lodging them in the churches and the priests' houses, that the Duke somewhat tardily put forth his hand and asserted his authority. The Catholic worship, which had for some months been suspended, was restored. But down to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Calvinism continued to flourish in Thouars and the neighbourhood.

It was in troublous times, therefore, that Louis' death left his wife, Jeanne de Montmorency, a widow, and his heir, the young Duke Claude, her son, but a boy of eleven years old. But Jeanne was as resolute a person as her father; and she brought up her children with great strictness. Probably not a little of Claude's high principle and unswerving devotion to duty was due to his mother's influence and training.

Hitherto, with the one exception of Gabrielle de Bourbon, there has been little to say of the La Trémoille women. But we are now approaching a period when the women of this great family in vigorous character and decisive action vied with the men, and even surpassed them.

Two years after her husband's death, the Duchesse de La Trémoille, believing Claude to have learnt all that his home tutor could teach him, sent her boy to Paris with a letter [1] to one, Monsieur Rouhet, whom she requested to select from the colleges a learned man (*un homme docte*) worthy to instruct her son.

As soon as he was of an age to bear arms Claude took service in the Catholic army, and was soon commanding a company of cavalry for King Henry III. But even

[1] See "Jeanne de Montmorency . . . et sa Fille, la Princesse de Condé," published by the Duc de La Trémoille, 1895, p. 5.

in those early years Claude must have been a strenuous youth, whom so decadent a monarch was not likely to inspire with any enthusiasm. Moreover, contact with the Calvinists of Poitou had doubtless already shaken Claude's orthodoxy. So we are not surprised to find that when, in 1585, the Duke de Mercœur at the head of a Catholic force invaded Poitou, the young Duke de La Trémoille threw in his lot with the Protestants and joined Henry de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, who was besieging Brouage.

It was indicative of his brave and resolute spirit that Claude de La Trémoille should have joined the Protestants at a time when their cause seemed most desperate. In Holland in the previous year the champion of the Protestant faith, William the Silent, had been shot by a Catholic fanatic. In England plots were thickening round Queen Elizabeth. In Spain, King Philip was preparing the great Armada, designed, with one blow, to destroy the reformed religion in these Islands. In France this year, 1585, witnessed the formation of the great Catholic League, and the papal excommunication of the Protestant leaders, Henry of Navarre and his cousin the Prince de Condé.

One of the results of Claude's joining the Protestants at Brouage was that during the siege their leader Condé went off to the La Trémoille castle of Taillebourg, there to pay his addresses to Mdlle. de La Trémoille, Claude's sister Charlotte, then a maiden of seventeen.

Condé had for eleven years been a sonless widower, his first wife, Marie de Clèves, having died in 1574. And Charlotte's beauty and intelligence, so we are told, were already famous throughout the land. Her intelligence we may credit, but her beauty—if we may judge from her

portraits—would not have appealed to the modern suitor. The high, aggressive forehead, the prominent eyes, heavy nose and thick lips, suggest ability and intelligence. But from the pictures of Charlotte we possess, it is hard to guess wherein lay that charm, which—if we may believe the gossips of the day—captivated two royal Henries in succession.[1]

Neither had Condé any physical attractions to recommend him: small and insignificant of figure, with prominent features and abundant wrinkles, he looked considerably older than his age, which was then thirty-three. Yet these two plain persons—for we *must* call Charlotte plain—were about to engage in one of the most thrilling romances of history, by the side of which many a romance of fiction grows dull and pale.

Charlotte, before she saw Condé, had made him her hero. His leadership of the Protestant party since 1574 had won him a reputation for valour and prowess, which appealed to Mdlle. de La Trémoille's imagination, quickened by the perusal of those popular romances of chivalry, which she had eagerly devoured in secret whenever she could escape from her mother's supervision.

Condé, before he saw Charlotte, had been attracted by the idea of marriage with the wealthy, clever and "beautiful" Mdlle. de La Trémoille. And both parties, when they met, remained enamoured of each other.

The unconventional conditions of their first meeting heightened the romance of their relationship. For the Duchess de La Trémoille, journeying from Thouars to

[1] The scandalmonger, Brantôme (see "Œuvres," ed. Lalanne, IX. 111), accuses her of having been Henry III.'s mistress. That she was the mistress of Henry IV. is suggested in the article in "La Biographie Universelle," on what authority we cannot divine, all the evidence we can discover going to prove that there was never any love lost between Henry of Navarre and the Princesse de Condé.

[*A. Giraudon, Photo*

CHARLOTTE DE LA TRÉMOILLE, PRINCESSE DE CONDÉ

From a portrait by François Quesnet in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Taillebourg to chaperon her daughter, had been delayed. So Charlotte in solitary state received her suitor and entertained him with the perfect assurance of seventeen summers, and the perfect serenity of *une grande dame.*

To Condé, Charlotte appeared the most beautiful woman in the world. To Charlotte, Condé appeared the greatest hero. He came to her but poorly attended, like a typical knight-errant, with a following of only three or four men-at-arms. That her lover should thus for her sake, and in open war, hazard his precious life, made Charlotte adore him more than ever. The garrison of her castle numbered no more than twenty-four men-at-arms. She trembled for her Prince's safety. But she did her best to minimise the risk he was running. At night, while her suitor slept soundly after his journey, this maiden of seventeen kept watch and ward. She superintended the changing of the sentinels, and patrolled the ramparts, peering out into the darkness to make sure that no danger threatened her sleeping hero. Before his departure on the morrow Condé recorded in writing a promise to marry his brave hostess.

But, alas! before that promise could be kept, danger and disaster overtook the adventurous lover. Leaving his infantry to continue the siege of Brouage, Condé proceeded from Taillebourg to attack Angers. On the way there he met Madame de La Trémoille. At first the Duchess had favoured the proposed marriage; but now, as Condé wrote hurriedly to Charlotte, for "some unknown reason" she looked coldly on his suit. This "unknown reason" is not difficult to divine; the King was said to have declared against the union, and Condé's prospects were steadily darkening.

Having met with a humiliating repulse before the walls

of Angers, the Prince, accompanied by Claude de La Trémoille, fled to St. Malo, where he took ship for Guernsey. And there, from October to January,[1] he remained in exile, vainly soliciting help from England.

Meanwhile Jeanne de Montmorency had joined her daughter at Taillebourg. There the stern Duchess found herself defied by the iron will of her daughter of seventeen. Charlotte refused to break off her engagement to Condé; she likewise refused at her mother's bidding to surrender her brother's castle of Taillebourg to the approaching Catholic army.

Jeanne, in high dudgeon, was reduced to leaving her daughter in command at Taillebourg. And shortly afterwards the castle was besieged by the King's troops.

Taillebourg, as we have said, was but meagrely garrisoned. It was also poorly provisioned, as well as being surrounded by the town and difficult to defend. Nothing daunted, however, Charlotte, like her niece the Lady of Lathom, fifty years later, made every preparation for a gallant defence. The only cannon she possessed, two small culverins, she placed at the gateway leading to the town, and in the night, letting one of her servants down by a rope from a castle window, she sent him with letters imploring help from the nearest Protestant army. This force, commanded by her kinsman, the Comte de Laval, quickly came to her aid and dispersed the besiegers.

Encouraged by her success at Taillebourg, this girl of seventeen next began to scheme for her lover's return to France, and with this object she went to La Rochelle.

One day in January, just as Condé and La Trémoille, disappointed in their hope of help from England, were reduced to the lowest depths of despair, they perceived

[1] 1585—1586.

approaching the Guernsey harbour two French ships of war. These vessels had been sent by Charlotte from La Rochelle. They were commanded by that stalwart Protestant, that "Pope of the Huguenots," as he was called, M. du Plessis-Mornay, who bore a letter from Mdlle. de La Trémoille to her betrothed.

Joyfully returning to La Rochelle on the warship, the exiles were welcomed by their fair deliverer, who, a few days later, on January 19th, was formally affianced to her hero. And, on the following March 16th, the consent of Madame de La Trémoille having been gained, the marriage was celebrated very simply, but, as it would seem, very appropriately, at that château of Taillebourg which the bride had so gallantly defended. Almost immediately afterwards the bride and bridegroom parted, for Condé must needs take the field against the Catholics.

Shortly before her marriage La Princesse de Condé had publicly embraced the Protestant faith. A year later her brother followed her example. Claude had been slow to change his opinions, but once having adopted *the religion*, as it was called, he became a pillar of the faith. No mere political Protestant he; in the fervour of his religious belief, and in the strictness of his religious practice, he resembled the English Puritans. His two most intimate friends were those bulwarks of Protestantism, M. du Plessis-Mornay and Agrippa d'Aubigné. With Henry of Navarre, whom he regarded as a sceptical time-server, Claude had no sympathy whatever; and we shall frequently find him withdrawing from the field of action, disgusted with Henry's two-facedness: he died in the shadow of the King's wrath, "overwhelmed," says d'Aubigné, "by the King's hatred." At the time

of the memorable reconciliation between Henry and d'Aubigné, so graphically related by the latter, the King reproached his former friend with having cared too much for La Trémoille. "It was a friendship made in your service," objected d'Aubigné. "Yes," replied Henry reproachfully, "but when I began to hate him, you did not cease from loving him." [1]

At Henry's brilliant victory of Coutras, won over the Duc de Joyeuse on October 20th, 1587, Claude was present. For Claude's sister, Charlotte, this Protestant victory of Coutras was to be fraught with the direst consequences. The Prince de Condé, who took part in the action, by a fall from his horse sustained an internal injury to which the ignorance of sixteenth century surgery attached no importance, not even when for five months it was followed by frequent attacks of fever, violent pain in the stomach, and occasional sickness. And when, on March 5th, 1588, Condé died, the doctors regarded his death as so sudden, and so mysterious that they demanded a post-mortem examination, as the result of which they declared the Prince to have died of poisoning. This was the verdict of five physicians and surgeons; and no one called it in question except the medical faculty of Montpellier. But not even the Montpellier doctors seem to have connected Condé's death with his fall at Coutras.

Even more disastrous than the doctors' obtusity was the malice which accused Charlotte of being her husband's murderer. This terrible charge was unsupported by a particle of evidence save a few wild words uttered by one of the witnesses under torture, and afterwards denied. Before her marriage Charlotte may have been fast;

[1] D'Aubigné, "Mémoires," ed. le Baron de Ruble, 108.

as we have said[1] she was the reputed mistress of Henry III. But that after her marriage to Condé she carried on an intrigue with her page, in order to marry whom she murdered her husband, which was the charge brought against her, would be highly improbable even if the cause of Condé's death were less obvious.

In those days lack of evidence mattered nothing, and Charlotte, though she was never brought to trial, was universally regarded as her husband's murderess, and for seven years, until 1595, kept in the strictest confinement. Had she not been expecting a child at the time of the Prince's death she would probably have been subjected to torture.

When in her prison of St. Jean d'Angély[2] on September 1st, 1588, Charlotte gave birth to a son, his legitimacy was questioned. It was not until four years later, when Henry of Navarre had ascended the French throne, and when, being without legitimate heirs, it suited his purpose to make Charlotte's son his godchild and heir-apparent to the French crown, that the King acknowledged him as Condé's son and a Prince of the Blood. The King's recognition of her son's legitimacy greatly improved Charlotte's position by helping to clear her from the charge of unfaithfulness to her husband.

Soon afterwards, the severity of her captivity was so far relaxed that she was allowed to leave her prison twice a week, in order to attend divine service. Yet, though still untried and unconvicted, she was regarded as a murderess. And the Calvinist ministers of St. Jean d'Angély refused to administer the Sacrament to her. In vain was there shown to them a letter from the King

[1] See *ante*, 96, n.

[2] In the province of Saintonge, on the high road from Saintes to Poitiers, and about sixty miles from the latter.

permitting to the Princess all the consolations of her religion. The Protestant pastors remained obdurate. Then it became necessary for the Duke of Thouars himself to interfere, and the influence of so powerful a pillar of the Reformed Church effected what the command of an apostate King had failed to accomplish : at the Duke's request a special consistory was summoned, which granted the Princess the privilege she coveted.

During all these years Charlotte had had no opportunity of clearing herself from the infamous charge under which she laboured. Time and again she had appealed for judgment to the Parlement of Paris, the highest court in the realm, and the only one which she as a princess held entitled to pass judgment upon her.

But it was not until 1595, seven years after her husband's death, that the King allowed her appeal. Then at length she was freed from captivity, and permitted to leave St. Jean d'Angély on the solemn promise, for the performance of which her brother and other great nobles stood surety, to appear before the Parliament at Paris on the following July 22nd.

There and then the Princess de Condé did duly appear ; but her two chief accusers, her brothers-in-law, the Prince de Conti and the Comte de Soissons, failed to answer the Parliament's summons, and so in their default there was nothing to be done but to declare the accused innocent. Thus at length, after seven interminable years of terrible suffering, Charlotte's ordeal came to an end. But there is little doubt that her acquittal was merely a political move on the part of the King. It did not suit him for the mother of his heir to lie in prison under the accusation of murder.

Indeed, all the while the Princess may have been

merely the King's scapegoat. For there were those who were inclined to accuse Henry himself of having instigated his cousin's murder. The two Protestant leaders had been known to be rivals, each jealous of the other's power and influence. Against Henry there was no more evidence than against the Princess. But the King was doubtless glad to have some one on to whom to cast the opprobrium of the supposed crime, until the indignation it had aroused had somewhat abated. Almost from the first Henry seems to have persuaded himself of Charlotte's guilt. "A dangerous beast is a wicked woman," he wrote to his mistress, *La Belle Corisande*,[1] soon after Condé's death. And even after he had permitted her rehabilitation, we doubt whether the King allowed himself to believe in her innocence; for, while lavishing favours upon the young Prince de Condé, Henry always treated Condé's mother with marked coldness. Possibly, had it not suited the royal purpose, Charlotte might have been left to languish like a condemned criminal in perpetual captivity.

In reviewing the history of this *cause célèbre*, one cannot help feeling astonished that a family so powerful as the La Trémoilles should have permitted Charlotte to suffer for so long such terrible injustice. Her mother, we know, did all she could to rehabilitate her. As soon as she heard of the accusation, the Duchess journeyed to St. Jean d'Angély, but when there she was refused admission to her daughter's prison.[2] Charlotte's brother, however,

[1] "La Princesse de Condé," Ed. Barthélémy, 236.

[2] M. Barthélémy represents Jeanne as having done nothing for her daughter; surely he cannot have seen a letter reproduced in "Jeanne de Montmorency et sa Fille," 7, relating the Duchess's journey to St. Jean d'Angély, and her efforts on her daughter's behalf. Several other letters in this volume prove how energetically the Duchess strove to obtain her daughter's freedom and justification.

the powerful Duc de Thouars, was the most influential member of her family. And we cannot discover that he ever actively bestirred himself to clear his sister from so horrible a charge. Apparently his only intervention on her behalf was when the ministers of St. Jean d'Angély refused her the Sacrament. Can it have been that, influenced by his friends, Condé's brothers, he believed his sister guilty of so dastardly a deed, and that he only changed his attitude towards her when the sun of royal favour seemed about to shine upon her and hers? With Calvinistic fatalism La Trémoille may have regarded Charlotte's sufferings as a divine punishment for her sins. If Claude had heard Brantôme's story of the intimacy between the Princess and Henry III., that in itself would have been sufficient to prejudice the Protestant Duke against his sister, and to account for his lukewarmness in her cause. For, although La Trémoille was himself the father of a son born out of wedlock, his Calvinism rendered him censorious of the failings of others, especially of his own sister. Even after Charlotte's acquittal, there is no evidence of any friendly intercourse between the brother and sister. During the Duke's last illness they were on such bad terms that the Duchess refused to admit her sister-in-law to Claude's chamber, pleading that the sight of the Princess would kill her husband.

As a brother, therefore, Claude de La Trémoille does not win our admiration; but in his public capacity, as a soldier and a defender of the Protestant faith against the attacks of the great Catholic League, he appears to greater advantage.

From the time of his return from Guernsey in 1586 until the pacification of Nantes in 1598, not a year passed without finding the Duc de Thouars in the field against

[*Giraudon, Photo*

JEANNE DE MONTMORENCY, DUCHESS DE LA TRÉMOILLE

From a portrait of the Clouet School

the enemies of Protestantism. In 1586, his horse was killed under him during an expedition in which he besieged and took his own castle of Talmond which the Catholics had captured. In the next year he commanded a body of light cavalry at Coutras, and in 1588 covered the attack on the sea-port of Marans, afterwards inflicting a check upon the Catholics near Poitiers. In 1589 we find him aiding the Béarnais [1] to besiege the Norman château of La Garnache, and later in the same year saving Tours and the King, Henry III., who was then residing within its walls, from capture by the Duc de Mayenne, then commanding the forces of the League.[2] In this year, on August 4th, Henry III. was assassinated, and Henry of Navarre became King of France. But for some time a large part of the nation refused to recognise him. And, in order to conciliate these malcontents, the King, on August 4th, issued a declaration promising to respect the Catholic religion, and to himself receive instruction in it.

To so stalwart a Protestant as Duke Claude this compromise seemed a betrayal of the sacred cause. He refused to fight for a Sovereign pledged to support "popish idolatry," and with a large company of Poitevins and Gascon reformers withdrew on to his own estates.

In the following year, however, La Trémoille appears to have thought better of his resolution. Possibly it was the invasion of France by a Spanish force under the Duke of Parma, who came to support the League, that drew the Duke once more into action. Raising a force of

[1] A name by which the King of Navarre, also Seigneur de Béarn, was frequently known among his contemporaries. Catherine de Médicis used to call him "mon petit Béarnais."

[2] After Guise's assassination at Blois, on December 23rd, 1588, Henry of France and Henry of Navarre had agreed to make common cause against the League.

500 gentlemen and 2,000 infantry, and equipping them all at his own expense, he joined the King's army, and, by breaking up a squadron of Walloons, won his share of glory in the great victory of Ivry. Later he took part in the long and unsuccessful siege of Paris. In 1592, he was present at the siege of Rouen, which was relieved by the Duke of Parma, and in 1595 at Henry's final defeat of the Spaniards at Fontaine-Française.

Though a valiant soldier, La Trémoille had a tender heart; at least, when neither religion nor morals were concerned. And his friend, D'Aubigné, relates [1] how one day, when they were passing by a place where terrible slaughter had occurred, the Duke turned pale and trembled, while his companion took him by the hand, saying: "Comrade, you must look at these things boldly, for in our life one has to accustom oneself to the sight of death."

It was in the year of Fontaine-Française, in 1595, that the King rewarded La Trémoille's services by converting his duchy into a *duché pairie*,[2] or duchy with a peerage attached. So Claude was now admitted to the mystic circle of the twelve peers of France, a company descended from the dim mists of the Dark Ages, for it had been called into being by no less a hero than the Emperor Charlemagne himself. But it was not until four years later that this high honour was publicly conferred upon La Trémoille. Then, by an elaborate ceremony performed by the Parlement of Paris, in the presence of the King and all the court, he was admitted to the company of the twelve.[3]

[1] "Mémoires," ed. le Baron de Ruble, 109.

[2] The peerage, unlike the duchy, descended only to heirs male, and in their default became extinct.

[3] It is described by Louise de Coligny, the step-mother of the Duchesse de La Trémoille, in one of her letters to her daughter. See "Lettres

In bestowing a peerage upon La Trémoille, Henry's motive was that proverbial gratitude which anticipates services to come while rewarding those that are past, for in the settlement with the Protestants which was to follow his accession to the throne of France[1] the King hoped to gain the support of the greatest Protestant leader in the west.

But the Duc de Thouars was not to be bribed; while accepting his peerage as a royal acknowledgment for all he had done in the past, Claude was determined to preserve an independent attitude in the future. In 1596, we find him seizing, for the payment of the Protestant garrison of Thouars, funds belonging to the crown, and in 1597 battling nobly for the Protestant cause in the negotiations which were to terminate in the Edict of Nantes. To La Trémoille's refusal to compromise were largely due those highly advantageous terms which the Edict granted to the Huguenots.

In order to discuss the terms of the settlement, a great assembly of deputies from the Huguenot churches was summoned to meet at Châtellerault on June 16th, 1597. And of this assembly the Duc de Thouars was elected President. The fact that he was then suffering from an attack of his lifelong enemy, the gout, probably did not increase his amenability; and soon, disgusted with the moderate demands of the deputies, he withdrew to Poitou, and there occupied himself in raising troops to be employed against the crown in case the assembly failed to arrange a settlement. Towards the close of the year, however, the Protestant churches persuaded

de Louise de Coligny . . . à . . . Charlotte Brabantine de Nassau, Duchesse de La Trémoille," ed. Marchegay, 1872, 10.

[1] Henry of Navarre was crowned King of France at Chartres on February 27th, 1594.

La Trémoille to return to Châtellerault and resume his presidency. Here he repulsed all the attempts of the King's emissaries, Gaspard de Schomberg and the President de Thou, to buy his submission with the promise of a pension for himself and high offices for his friends. Indignantly addressing these tempters, the Duke exclaimed: "Gentlemen, I excuse you, for you come from extinguishing the League, the members of which you found swollen with private interest. To prick such persons in their most sensitive spot was enough to reduce the whole party to nothing. To show you that such conditions do not exist among us, let me tell you that were you to give me half the kingdom and to refuse those poor folk in the hall liberty to serve God in safety, it would profit you nothing. But if you grant them such things as are just and necessary, then the King may hang me at the door of the assembly, and you will still have accomplished your mission and established your work on a sure foundation."

Marvelling at these words, the President de Thou turned to D'Aubigné, and asked whether there were many Huguenots like this.

Still finding it impossible to procure what he considered fair terms, La Trémoille, on March 6th, again withdrew into Poitou, and this time he did not return.

His successor in the presidency proved more docile, and on April 13th, 1598, the Edict of Nantes was signed and declared irrevocable.

Considering the ideas of religious toleration then prevalent, the provisions of the Edict were quite as favourable as the Protestants had any right to expect. They were granted the free exercise of their religion in all places where it had been established in the two preceding

CLAVDE DE LA TREMOILLE
Duc de Thouars Pair de France fils de Louys
Duc de la Tremoille et de Jeanne de Montmorency
nasquit a Thouars le 20. decem. 1567. A l'âge de 18. ans il eut
le comandem.t gnal de la Cavalerie à la bataille de Coutras et en soutint
tout l'effort il signala sa valeur en celle d'Ivry cõme il fit es combats de Diepe Tours
Fontaine françoise Bondy et Yuetot il fut blessé et eut son cheval tué sous luy pres Taille-
bourg a la defaite des troupes de Mercœlin En l'annee 1592. il defit aussi l'armee de
la ligue commandée par le Vicomte de la Guierche qui fut tué dans ce combat
près Chasteleraut et il n'y eut rencõ ni occasion honorable sous le regne
de Henry 4.me ou il ne se trouvast et ou il ne donnat d'illustres marqs
de son courage et de sa conduite en presen ce de ce grand Roy; qui resolut princi=
palem.t en sa considerãon d'establir par l'Edit de Nantes l'union et le repos de
tous ses subjets. En l'annee 1627. Henry de Bourbon Prince de Conde espousa en son Chastau
de Taillebourg Charlotte Catherine de la Tremoille sa Soeur. Et l'an 1598. il espousa
la Princesse de Nassau Fille de Guillaume de Nassau Prince d'Orange et de Charlotte
de Bourbon. Il finit a Thouars vne vie glorieuse par vne mort Chrestienne le 25.
Octobre 1607. âgé seulement de 37. ans son corps gist en la Ste. Chapelle dudit lieu
qui est la fondation et la Sepulture de ses Ancestres. A Paris chez Louys Boisseuin

years, in those named in the Edict of 1577, and in one city or town in every district of a seneschal where its establishment did not infringe treaties already made with Catholics. Further, no less than 100 strongholds, some of them extremely defensible, like Montpellier, Montauban and La Rochelle, were left for eight years in the possession of the Protestant party ; and, while the Huguenots were to appoint the governors of these places, the Catholic state undertook to pay them and their garrisons. When we remember that, in addition to these privileges Protestants were to be admitted to all colleges, schools and hospitals, to all offices and employments, without submitting to any oath or ceremony contrary to their conscience, and that they were to be permitted to found schools and colleges of their own, we realise how great was the strength of the Protestant party as established by the Edict of Nantes, and how high a price La Trémoille's firmness compelled King Henry to pay for Protestant support.

Whilst at Châtellerault, La Trémoille had not been wholly absorbed in the negotiations between the King and the Huguenots ; other matters, one of which was extremely personal, had engaged his attention. For some years he had been in search of a wife, and now, in 1597, he was proposing to marry Charlotte Brabantine de Nassau,[1] the daughter of that great hero and martyr of Protestantism, William the Silent, Prince of Orange.[2]

William had been four times married ; and the lady whom La Trémoille was courting was the Prince's daughter by his third wife, Charlotte de Bourbon,[3] daughter of Louis, Duc de Montpensier.

[1] Born at Antwerp on September 27th, 1580.
[2] He had been assassinated in 1584.
[3] Before embracing "the religion," Charlotte had been abbess of the Convent of Jouarre. William's other wives were Anne d'Egmont,

The marriage contract between Claude de La Trémoille and Charlotte of Nassau, drawn up at Châtellerault, was signed by the bride's brother, Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange, in his camp before the town of Oldenzeel, on October 23rd, 1597. The bridegroom, being too much occupied with political affairs to leave his country, the Princess Charlotte, accompanied by her step-mother Louise, Coligny's daughter, and her governess, journeyed to Thouars, where in March, 1598, the marriage was celebrated.

At first Henry IV. seems to have considered himself slighted because La Trémoille had not consulted him before asking for the hand of a foreign princess. So Claude deemed it prudent to despatch an emissary to court in order to explain his action to the King. The emissary was apparently successful, and Henry must have relented, for the year after the wedding we find him graciously granting, as a sign of his favour, to the servants of La Dame de La Trémoille, Duchesse de Thouars, permission to bear muskets throughout the length and breadth of her lands, and to shoot such game "as are not forbidden by royal ordinances." [1]

Both for husband and wife, Claude's marriage appears to have been a very happy one. Abundant evidence of their affection for one another may be found in the interesting letters of Charlotte's step-mother, Louise de Coligny.

Interspersed with family matters and scenes of country life are vivid descriptions of everyday doings at the French court. There we see the ladies quarrelling over

Anne, daughter of Maurice, Elector of Saxony, and Louise de Coligny, daughter of the Admiral and widow of Charles de Téligny, who perished in the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

[1] "Les La Trémoilles pendant cinq Siècles," IV., 31.

precedence, while those whose privilege was beyond dispute sit serenely on their *tabourets* round Queen Marie de Médicis, all busily at work embroidering a vast counterpane. That Louise and her step-daughter were on the best of terms is proved by the playful manner in which the Admiral's daughter twits Madame de La Trémoille for her disgraceful handwriting : " I am sure you will find it as difficult to read mine as I do yours," she writes, " because for you every day calligraphy must become more and more of a lost art." [1]

As one reads these lively letters, one would never dream through what terrible tragedies their writer had lived in earlier years—that, by the hands of Catholic assassins, she had been orphaned and twice widowed.[2] Yet even over Louise's gaiety serious concerns do occasionally cast their shadow : that eternal lack of pence, which in days of civil war harassed all classes, makes itself felt in the Princess's reiterated request for the repayment of certain monies which she had lent to the Duke at the time of his marriage. In her letters to her step-daughter the plaintive request occurs over and over again like a refrain ; " I would come and visit you at Thouars if only La Trémoille would pay me my money ; " " I hear that the Duke is to visit Paris, remind him to bring my money with him," and so forth. No wonder that Claude was in financial difficulties, seeing what vast sums he had expended on the equipment and maintenance of troops during the religious wars. But in the end the loan was repaid, although not long afterwards we find the Duke compelled to raise money by

[1] " Lettres de Louise de Coligny . . . à . . . Charlotte Brabantine de Nassau," 9—10.

[2] Her father, Admiral Coligny, had been killed on the eve of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572), during which her first husband, Charles de Teligny, perished ; while her second husband, William, Prince of Orange, was shot by the fanatic, Gérard, shortly after their marriage.

selling to Maximilien de Béthune, Marquis de Rosny, the fine old La Trémoille château of Sully, which, as will be remembered, had been in the family for over 200 years.

Despite this financial misunderstanding, Louise was sincerely attached to her son-in-law. And perhaps what pleased her most in him was his affection for his wife. "Your husband is passionately in love with you," she writes to Charlotte. But Madame de La Trémoille did not need this assurance, for at that time Claude was writing her amorous letters, one of which, dated Paris, June 27th, 1598, has been preserved in the La Trémoille archives.[1]

After referring to the petty jealousies and quarrels of the court, and expressing solicitude for his wife's health, Claude writes: "I greatly desire to see you. Besides the affection for you which my duty enjoins upon me, believe me, my dear lady, all my inclination is to love you passionately. Never doubt it, and believe that I adore you as much as it is possible to adore anyone. Often do I recall my delight in your presence and my joy in your young beauty.[2] My imagination leads me to tell you of my ardour. When we are parted my greatest joy is to think of you. Farewell, my heart, a thousand and a thousand times do I kiss you; and rather would I die than that the affection which I am sure you bear me should diminish."

On December 22nd, 1598, Charlotte gave birth to a son,[3] whom his fond grandmother hears is "a child so handsome, and so fat that he might well be mistaken for a Dutch baby."[4] "His uncle,"[5] she

[1] "Le Chartier de Thouars," 108.
[2] Born in 1580, the Duchess was eighteen at the time of her marriage, while her husband was thirty-two.
[3] Henry, Duc de La Trémoille.
[4] "Lettres," 8.
[5] The Duc de Bouillon, who had married another daughter of William the Silent.

continues, " swears that he is like his own little daughter, but that is pure imagination, since he has never seen him." [1]

Then there followed in succession three other children : in December, 1599, Charlotte,[2] who married Lord Strange, later Earl of Derby ; in October, 1600, Elizabeth, who died in infancy ; and about March, 1602, Frédéric, who took the title of Comte de Laval, and was killed in a duel at Venice in 1642. Claude's domestic bliss was but short-lived. Despite annual visits to French watering-places, his old enemy, the gout, was growing more and more importunate. The lively Louise in one of her letters [3] pictures her son-in-law in his bath. " I can see," she writes, " his fat valet, bearing with all his weight on the Duke's shoulders in order to emerse him in the mud, and all the while pulling wry faces as he sees his master's skin defiled with mire, but mire which is salutary, since it does him so much good."

The baths failed to effect a cure, and in October, 1604, while his daughter Charlotte lay ill of the small-pox, the Duke died at Thouars, in the presence of his old friend, M. du Plessis-Mornay.

The latter and Agrippa d'Aubigné were present, on October 26th, at the opening of La Trémoille's will. This is a striking document,[4] expressing the Duke's stern *Huguenotterie* and unrelenting Calvinism. After making a profession of faith in " the true and perfect religion of Jesus Christ as professed by the reformed Churches of France," Claude proceeds to threaten with his curse any of his children who, forsaking " this true and perfect "

[1] "Lettres," II.
[2] She became the famous Lady of Lathom, of whom more hereafter.
[3] Dated October, 1600.
[4] See " Les La Trémoilles pendant cinq Siècles," IV., 34.

religion in which alone lies salvation, shall marry outside the reformed Church.

Claude's terrible injunction, however, proved unavailing : only fourteen years later, his son and successor, Henry de La Trémoille, braving his father's curse, having been instructed by Cardinal Richelieu, in the camp before La Rochelle, abjured his father's religion, and returned to the bosom of the Catholic Church.

Henry's abjuration did not end the La Trémoille connection with Protestantism. His wife, Marie de la Tour, remained a Calvinist, and his son and daughter both reverted to their grandfather's religion.

Meanwhile, Henry's Aunt Charlotte, the famous Princesse de Condé and her son had some years before Claude's death[1] been received back into the Roman Communion.

While Claude died at thirty-eight, Charlotte lived to be an old woman. In 1604, the Princess's adventurous career had still many years to run—years in which her inflexible will and imperious temper were to involve her in more than one serious dispute, and even in civil war.

In 1596, she with her son had taken up her abode at St. Germain. As governor to the young Prince, then the recognised heir-presumptive to the throne of France, the King had appointed the Marquis de Pisani. For this important office Henry could hardly have chosen a man more eminent in council and in war. Besides being a famous marshal, Pisani was a veteran diplomatist. But to us his chief interest is the reflected glory which he gains from his daughter, the brilliant Marquise de Rambouillet, the mistress of what is commonly held to be the first French Salon.[2]

[1] In 1596.

[2] In reality, other Salons less famous but equally distinguished, Louise Labé's at Lyon and Madame de Morel's at Paris, had flourished in the sixteenth century.

That the Marquis de Pisani was not a very tactful tutor appears from a letter he wrote to King Henry soon after his appointment. The Princess and her son had just arrived at St. Germain. "Madame, his mother, takes great care of him," writes Pisani. But he goes on to complain that the Prince has no establishment of his own, not even a piece of furniture, that he sleeps in his mother's room, and that his Governor can never see him in the morning and evening to correct "sundry little faults which time will increase, if they be not checked early." [1]

This attempt to thrust himself in between mother and child caused the Princess to dislike Pisani; and from first to last they were sworn foes, for ever disputing as to the method of their charge's upbringing. "It is pitiable to see how this little Prince is being treated," wrote his Governor.[2]

Pisani's method was probably the best; at any rate the following anecdote related by Tallemant des Réaux makes the tutor's *régime* appear to have been bottomed in sound sense. Riding along the road one day on their way to the hunt, the Marquis and his pupil passed a peasant, who in humble loyalty prostrated himself at his prince's feet. But the young Condé went on his way, paying no heed to the man's salutations, not even by so much as a nod. "Monsieur," remonstrated his Governor, "there may be no one lower than that man, as there is no one higher than you; but if he and his equals did not cultivate the land, you and your equals would be in danger of dying from starvation." [3]

Perhaps the imputation of insensibility to feminine charms under which Condé was to labour in after years

[1] Barthélémy, "La Princesse de Conde," 205.
[2] *Ibid.*, 93.
[3] Tallemant des Réaux, "Mémoires," ed. 1834, I. 32.

arose from the strictness of his upbringing; for we are told that when he and the future Queen of Rambouillet were children together, in one of their games, he took the little girl's head in his hands and kissed her, an indiscretion for which, so runs the tale, he was punished so severely that he ever afterwards disliked women.[1]

The perpetual bickerings between Charlotte and her son's Governor only came to an end when, in 1599, Pisani died, and Henry IV. appointed to succeed him a man after the Princess's own heart, the Comte de Bellin, a former general of the League.[2]

But by that time the young Condé's importance was beginning to dwindle, for Henry IV., having obtained a divorce from his first wife, Marguerite de Valois, had married Marie de Médicis, who was about to bear him an heir. "When I wished to make my nephew a King, I gave him the Marquis of Pisani," said Henry, "when I wished to make him a subject I gave him the Comte de Bellin."[3]

Pisani had died at the Princess's residence of St. Maur-les-Fossés, an ancient Abbey, not far from Paris, once belonging to Catherine de Médicis, and after her death purchased by Charlotte's mother. The Abbey, with the rest of Jeanne de Montmorency's estate, had on her death, in 1596, passed into her daughter's possession; and La Princesse de Condé was now a rich woman. Her wealth, however, did not hinder her from waging a warfare of words with that skilful financier, Sully, on the questions of the amount of her son's pension and the sum to be expended on the maintenance of his household.

Having withdrawn to St. Maur in order to escape

[1] Tallemant des Réaux, op. cit. I., 32.
[2] *Ibid.*, 32.
[3] *Ibid.*, 32.

from an epidemic which was ravaging St. Germain, the Princess continued to reside at the Abbey until the close of Henry's reign; for the King, persisting in his dislike of his cousin's widow, always met with coldness her various attempts to obtain a position at court.

Only once during the ten years which preceded Henry's assassination [1] do we find her appearing at Paris. That was in March, 1609, on the occasion of her son's marriage with the beautiful Charlotte de Montmorency.[2] Then the Princess de Condé was present with all the court at the formal betrothal in the Louvre gallery at Chantilly.

With Mdlle. de Montmorency, who was considered by all the court gallants to be perfect in beauty and in grace, the King was passionately in love. And it was in the hope of making her his mistress that Henry had chosen for her husband the cold-blooded Condé, the reputed misogynist of the court. But the King was mistaken in his cousin; Condé did not prove the accommodating husband he had hoped; for, suspecting the royal designs, he obtained permission to take his wife to Moret, on the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau, and thence, putting her on a pillion behind one of his valets, he carried her off in haste to the Low Countries.

The news of his lady's departure was brought to the King at Paris as he sat at cards with some nobles of the court. "My friend, I am lost," whispered the King to his partner, "take care of my money and keep the game going while I enquire into this matter."[3] Having learned

[1] May, 1610.

[2] Daughter of the Constable, Henry de Montmorency, known earlier as Maréchal de Damville, son of the famous Anne de Montmorency.

[3] "Mémoires," Bassompierre, ed. Mich. et Poujoulat, Série II., Vol. VI. 67.

that the tidings were only too true, Henry flew into a violent passion. Summoning his ministers, he inquired first from one, then from the other, what was to be done, while the cautious Sully nearly drove his master to desperation by counselling him to do nothing. Far from following Sully's advice, Henry, in the hottest haste, despatched a gentleman of the court to pursue the fugitives and, if possible, persuade them to return; but, in the event of his failure, the messenger was instructed to warn the powers of the Low Countries that they would incur the enmity of the King of France if they granted harbourage to the runaway couple.

In both missions Henry's messenger failed, for Condé and his bride crossed the frontier and found refuge at Brussels. There the lady stayed until the King's death. Condé, as soon as his wife was out of the King's way, ceased to take any interest in her and, escaping in disguise, went off to Italy. He was at Milan when the news of Henry's assassination reached him and brought him back to Paris.

Marie de Médicis, who had seized the Regency on her husband's death, dreaded Condé's return, fearing that, as a Prince of the Blood, he might claim the right to rule during the King's minority. But, although he entered the capital in a somewhat redoubtable manner, at the head of 1,500 gentlemen, Condé proved ready to sell his birthright for a pension of 50,000 crowns and the Hôtel de Gondi.[1] Afterwards, he installed his mother in a little hôtel in the Rue de Condé close by. Then, in these two palaces, the Prince and Princess Dowager proceeded to hold a veritable court, and to gather round

[1] Later known as the Hôtel de Condé. Pulled down in the eighteenth century; it occupied almost exactly the site of the modern Théâtre de l'Odéon.

them a party of opposition to the government of the Queen Regent and of her favourite, Concini, best known as the Maréchal d'Ancre.

The chief point of their attack was the government's foreign policy, the Franco-Spanish alliance, which was to be cemented by a double marriage, that of Louis XIII. with Anne of Austria, Philip III.'s eldest daughter, and of Elizabeth of France with the Prince of the Asturias. Twice, in 1614 and 1615, did Condé and his associates have recourse to arms. Although they failed to prevent the Spanish marriages—that of Louis XIII. was celebrated in the Cathedral of Bordeaux in November, 1615—they succeeded in forcing the government to summon the States General—for the last time before the Revolution. They succeeded also in extracting from the crown vast sums of money, which were paid into the Prince's exchequer. Indeed, from the two agreements of Sainte Menehould and Loudon, Condé acquired so much power and importance, which he used with so much insolence, that he seemed to eclipse the authority of the Queen: the finances were abandoned to his direction; no ordinance was issued without his signature; and, while the Louvre was deserted, to Condé's hotel such crowds resorted that it was difficult to approach the gates. So powerful a rival Marie de Médicis could not possibly tolerate. While apparently all smiles and graces to the Prince, she was in reality planning his arrest. This took place one morning, September 1st, 1616, in the King's chamber in the palace of the Louvre.[1]

Very soon afterwards the Princess Dowager, in her hôtel, received the news that her son had been assassinated.

[1] It is graphically related in "L'Histoire des Princes de Condé," by the Duc d'Aumale (1886), III. 85—87.

Charlotte was by that time a middle-aged woman of forty-eight, but the courage and decision of early years now returned to her. This was the kind of occasion when she appeared to greatest advantage. Immediately she ordered her coach, and, accompanied by an imposing escort on horseback, drove through the streets of the capital endeavouring to raise Paris on her son's behalf. Leaning out of the carriage window, her face bathed in tears, she cried: "To arms, gentlemen of Paris! The Maréchal d'Ancre has slain Monsieur le Prince! To arms, all good Frenchmen!" And her escort re-echoed the cry.

But this dramatic scene availed nothing. While a few shops were shut for fear of disturbance, the phlegmatic Parisians looked on, and laughed when one feeble old woman stretched a chain across the street.

Having driven down to the Pont de Notre Dame, Charlotte, convinced of the failure of her attempted *coup d'état*, ordered her coachman to turn round, and with her escort went back to her hôtel, where she found some thirty of her friends assembled. Having learnt from them that, after all, her son was alive although a prisoner, she adopted her friends' advice to renounce all attempt to raise a rebellion.[1]

This, as far as we know, was the Princess's last sensational appearance in public. During her son's imprisonment, first in the Bastille, then at Vincennes, she made every effort for his deliverance, and vainly solicited the interference of James I. of England on his behalf. But Condé was not released until 1619. Some time before, his wife had joined him at Vincennes, where in this year

[1] The only disorder which actually took place was the sacking of the hôtels of Concini and of his secretary by the mob, under the leadership of one Picard, a shoemaker.

[*Giraudon, Photo*

TOMB OF CHARLOTTE DE LA TRÉMOILLE, PRINCESSE DE CONDÉ

Formerly in the Convent of Ave Maria, now in the Louvre

she gave birth to a daughter, who was to become the famous Duchesse de Longueville.[1]

Of Charlotte de La Trémoille's last years there is little to relate. Like that other turbulent Frenchwoman, Georges Sand, after a tempestuous youth and maturity, the Princess enjoyed a peaceful old age. She became reconciled to her sister-in-law, the Dowager Duchess of Thouars, with whose eldest son Henry, Duc de Thouars, she had been for some years corresponding on friendly terms. She lived to see the head of the La Trémoille house return to the Catholic faith, and she died in the following year, on August 29th, 1629, in her hôtel at Paris.

Her body was buried in the Convent of the Ave Maria, where an elaborate monument was erected to her memory.[2] Her heart was placed in the burial-place of the Condés at Valèry, near Montereau.

The story of her son's life after her death belongs to the history of the House of Condé. Here it may suffice to say that he became the bitter enemy of the Huguenots, fighting against them in the expedition to the Ile de Ré, and retiring from the army rather than make peace with those into whose church he had been born. Ever careful to secure his own personal advancement, he married his son, then the Duc d'Enghien, to the niece of Cardinal Richelieu. Surviving until 1646, he lived to see the dawn of that son's military glory.

[1] Two years later was born Condé's son, Louis, who was to be known as "le Grand Condé."

[2] See illustration.

CHAPTER VI

THE LADY OF LATHOM. 1559—1664

Now we come to a La Trémoille who is no stranger to English readers. For Charlotte de La Trémoille, Duke Claude's daughter, stands immortalised in one of the most popular of our novels, in "Peveril of the Peak." Students of history know her as the stern Countess of Derby who gallantly defended Lathom House against the Parliamentarians. Readers of fiction remember her chiefly as the imperious lady in Scott's novel, who, advancing suddenly from behind the arras in the gilded chamber of Martindale Castle, startled little Peveril and the baby Alice at their play.

While the Lady of Lathom's gifted biographer,[1] Madame de Witt, accused Scott of travestying the Countess, and of degrading one of the noblest of women into a mere heroine of melodrama, others may marvel at the accuracy with which the novelist has caught and rendered the spirit of Charlotte de La Trémoille. Scott may have availed himself of the novelist's license to twist and distort facts. Indeed, in his introduction to "Peveril of the Peak," he admits that he has dared to transform into a Catholic so stalwart a Protestant as Duke Claude's daughter. He might also have admitted that at her door instead of at her son's, he has laid the guilt, if guilt it were, of the

[1] The two best biographies of the Lady of Lathom are one by Madame de Witt (translated into English, 1869), and another by Léon Marlet (1895).

traitor Christian's summary execution. But for these violations of the letter of history his adherence to its spirit amply atones ; and no one has ever passed a truer verdict upon Charlotte's character than Sir Walter's description of the famous Countess as " a man when so many men proved women."

Charlotte was every inch a heroine and every inch the granddaughter of William the Silent. Not only from her illustrious lineage, however, but also from her strenuous upbringing, she derived that heroism with which she ever confronted the vicissitudes of her tempestuous life.

She was, as we have said, a mere child when her father died. And it was to two stern Protestant women, her step-grandmother, Louise de Coligny, the Admiral's daughter, and her mother, Charlotte Brabantine, the daughter of William the Silent, that fell the care of her nurture and education. The chief object of these Calvinist dames seems to have been to tame their young charge's turbulence and to break her will. This they never completely achieved. They did succeed, however, in refining Charlotte's passionate turbulence into that calm courage and her obstinate self-will into that persistent tenacity which were eventually to render her the brave defendress of her husband's house and lands.

There is little doubt that all seventeenth century children, but especially those of Puritan parents, were more strictly brought up than are the children of to-day. It was, therefore, in accordance with the custom of the age that Charlotte's childhood should have been a series of chastisements. In mortal terror of these punishments we find the child in her own early letters, and in those of her mother and grandmother, constantly protesting her resolution " to be good." But that this resolve frequently

shared the proverbial fate of such determinations may be gathered from the numerous references in her relatives' letters to a generous administration of the rod.

"I have her well flogged whenever she deserves it," wrote her grandmother at the Hague, where Charlotte was then staying; and again, "her governess does not spare the cane." Even the child's absent mother from distant Thouars collaborated in her little girl's punishment, and when she heard that Charlotte had been naughty refused to send her a New Year's gift.

Mdlle. de La Trémoille's weaknesses were those of most little girls of her age: a love of play, a lack of application and a fondness for dress. But the Calvinist minds of her guardians tortured these healthy symptoms into signs of original sin, which, if not nipped in the bud, would bloom later into vices hideous and deadly. "To-day, Sunday——" triumphantly writes Charlotte's grandmother, "she is crying because she is not allowed to wear her best frock."

Yet even Coligny's daughter permitted some worldly amusements. Charlotte went to parties. But the heart of her absent mother was filled with misgiving when she heard that her little daughter had been the belle of a babies' ball. Such vanities could only have one result, and surely enough, so she gathered from the next letter, that result followed. Charlotte was said to be showing a dangerous fondness for the opposite sex, for she had been found talking privily to her grandmother's nephew, a youth in his teens, one of the Chatillons who was staying at the Hague.

In those days the young ladies of the Dutch capital were reputed fast, and the influence of these flighty damsels Charlotte's mother feared was beginning to

bear poisonous fruit in her little girl of ten. So Mdlle. de La Trémoille was recalled from the snares of the Hague to the cloistered retreat of her Poitevin home. In vain did Louise and the castigating governess write protesting that Charlotte's flirtation with Chatillon was but an exception, and that usually she regarded her boy friends with the proudest disdain. William the Silent's daughter was not to be convinced, and Charlotte came home.

Very absurd to us to-day seems all this fuss over a boy and girl's harmless conversation. But we must remember that in the seventeenth century maidens grew up quickly, that a girl of ten was then regarded as a young miss of seventeen would be now, and that in questions of morals Calvinists have always tended to make mountains out of mole-hills.

At Thouars, Charlotte had no playmates of either sex to join her in those games of which she was reputed so inordinately fond. For her only sister Elizabeth had died of that same epidemic of small-pox which, at the time of her father's death, had smitten Charlotte. Her eldest brother, Henry, gloomy and taciturn, was no cheerful companion when at home, and frequently he was absent on those distant travels which were then held necessary for the education of a complete gentleman.

With what meticulous care Madame de La Trémoille educated her children may be seen in the list of instructions[1] with which she equipped her son, when, in December, 1613,[2] the young Duke, then a boy of fifteen, set out for Holland, there to visit his uncle, the Stadtholder, Prince Maurice of Nassau. In these instructions we find the length of the traveller's absence, not more than four or

[1] "Chartier de Thouars," 124—125.
[2] Two years later Henry visited Switzerland and Italy.

five weeks, carefully specified, a list of the towns he is to visit—on no account must he miss Delft and Leyden—admonitions as to his expenditure—at the Hague he may buy himself a complete outfit, but nothing must be purchased save by the advice of those who accompany him—and rules for his daily conduct—an hour every afternoon must be set aside for some profitable exercise, all that is remarkable in the places visited must be observed and written down, but above all things, the traveller must not forget to pray every night and morning, "remembering that without God he can do nothing."

Charlotte's youngest brother, Frédéric, Comte de Laval, was her favourite. To him she was devotedly attached, and over his babyhood she watched with all the passionate tenderness of a loving little mother. Frédéric's was a cheerful spirit; but, alas! his natural gaiety, reacting against Calvinist strictness, was to lead him into wild and yet wilder courses, until finally he perished in a duel at Venice. Not long after her return from the Hague, however, Charlotte and Frédéric were parted, for the young Comte de Laval was sent away from home to pursue his studies at the University of Sedan.

Meanwhile, Mdlle. de La Trémoille's own education was progressing apace, and she could write to her mother: "Thank God, you will find me quite learned. I know seventeen Psalms, all the quatrains of Pibrac, all the huitains of Zamariel, and above all, I can talk Latin.[1] But these serious studies, while developing a strenuousness of character which was to prove valuable in after

[1] Charlotte de La Trémoille's letters quoted in this chapter may be found in the two biographies of the Lady of Lathom already referred to. Both Madame de Witt and Léon Marlet claim to have copied the letters direct from the original MSS., which are in the possession of the Duke de La Trémoille.

years, can hardly have enlivened the little girl's solitude. Among her seventeen Psalms would doubtless be those two Huguenot favourites, the battle psalm as it was called: "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let them also that hate Him flee before Him," and that eloquent lamentation, "My tears have been my meat day and night . . . O my God, my soul is cast down within me . . . all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." Natural enough may these curses and wailings sound upon the lips of a mature Calvinist, but in the mouth of a mere babe they strike one as somewhat inappropriate.

No more likely to foster the blithe spirit one likes to associate with childhood were the verses of the Calvinist agitator, Zamariel or Chandieu, on the vanity of all things human, or those moral quatrains of Pibrac, which for seven generations boys and girls were required to commit to memory. Two lines of these quatrains: "Love the state as thou findest it; be it royal then love royalty," [1] must have stamped themselves upon Charlotte's memory, and from them she must have derived inspiration for her whole career; indeed, she might have chosen them as her motto.

Already a *régime* of chastening and chastising was casting a gloom over Charlotte's natural cheerfulness. She was rapidly losing her love of play, and at fifteen we find her wondering whether a ball were really worth the trouble. Yet some sparks of fun still remained to her, and she could laugh at the exaggerated seriousness of a Protestant pastor denouncing certain wedding festivities she had attended. "How he did scold,"

[1] Ayme l'estat tel que tu le vois estre:
S'il est royal, ayme la Royauté.
Quoted by Montaigne, "Essais," Bk. III.: "De la Vanité."

wrote the maiden; "why, he nearly mentioned us all by name, and yet I assure you we had done nothing to deserve such reproaches."

In 1619 life grew less solitary for Charlotte, for in that year her brother Henry brought home to Thouars his young bride and cousin, Marie de La Tour d'Auvergne, daughter of the Duc de Bouillon. Plain, grasping, and, above all, ambitious, Marie cannot have been a very attractive companion; yet some good qualities must have been hers, for she and Charlotte were speedily united in a friendship which endured until Charlotte's death. Indeed, it is from the correspondence of the sisters-in-law, preserved in the archives of Thouars, that we derive much of our information concerning our heroine's career.

Visits to Paris, too, in company with her mother, who was conducting a law-suit there, occasionally broke the routine of life at Thouars. And, now that Charlotte was growing up, came the diversion of various proposals of marriage, for Mdlle. de La Trémoille, one of the wealthiest heiresses in Europe, was naturally much sought after.

Not among the Italianate nobles of Marie de Médicis' dissolute court was the Duchess likely to find a suitable husband for her daughter. Moreover, according to her father's will, Charlotte's mate must perforce be a Protestant. But French Protestants in those days were rapidly dwindling in power, wealth and importance. Charlotte's choice, therefore, was very limited; and so it fell out that at the age of twenty-six she was still to marry.

It was doubtless with the object of marrying her daughter that in 1626 Madame de La Trémoille took her to Holland. At the Hague, Charlotte revisited the scene of her infantile gaieties, and wrote to her sister-in-law at

Thouars a somewhat doleful letter, in which, after mechanically describing the magnificent feting of the Persian Ambassador, she moaned over " the horrible laws " of the Persians, especially with regard to women, over the lack of religious zeal in Flanders, and finally over the perplexities of life in general. " More and more is it borne in upon me," she groaned, " how difficult a place the world is to live in. May God guide us, and may He grant unto you, my heart, a full measure of contentment."

The hospitable Dutch court was then sheltering the exiled King and Queen of Bohemia, Frédéric, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, and his fascinating wife, Charles I.'s sister, Elizabeth Stuart, known in history as " the Queen of Hearts." [1] Elizabeth's husband was the Duchess's nephew, and the La Trémoilles soon after their arrival joined that distinguished circle gathered round the sovereigns in exile. To the match-making Queen it was a great advantage to have the hand of a wealthy heiress to dispose of, and from among the young English noblemen who had flocked to the Hague to do homage to Elizabeth's charms, she was not long in selecting a husband for Charlotte. Possibly among " the perplexities of life " which then afflicted Mdlle. de La Trémoille were the rival appeals to her affections of the addresses of James Stanley, Lord Strange, and her love for her motherland.

As for Madame de La Trémoille, she had no doubt whatever as to the reception to be given to Lord Strange's wooing of her daughter. For James Stanley, besides being a staunch Protestant, was son and heir to the Earl of Derby, whose vast estates in Lancashire and Cheshire, and whose so-called sovereignty of the Isle of Man,

[1] See Sir Henry Wotton's verses to Elizabeth of Bohemia.

rendered him one of the greatest and wealthiest of English nobles. The Stanleys, moreover, on the female side, were of royal blood, being descended from Mary Tudor, daughter of King Henry VII.[1]

The fact that Lord Strange was two years Charlotte's junior did not seem to the Duchess any serious objection, and she gladly gave her consent to the wedding, which was celebrated at the Hague in July. Soon afterwards the bride and bridegroom, accompanied by the bride's mother, set out for England.

They reached London in the midst of a court crisis. In the previous summer Charles I. had wedded his French bride, Henrietta Maria, the daughter of King Henry IV. The first years of their married life had been one long series of disputes, which the King had just now brought to a climax by his peremptory dismissal of the Queen's French attendants, whom he had ordered to pack up and depart at a few days' notice. This summary measure, while delighting Londoners and members of Parliament, with whom the French papists were most unpopular, threw Henrietta Maria into such a fury that she and her husband were barely on speaking terms.

[1] The illustrious descent of Charlotte and her husband may be seen from the following genealogical table, printed in Horace Walpole's "Letters," Cunningham edition, VI. 372, note:—

Henry VII.
|
Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk = Mary Tudor.
|
L. de Bourbon, D. de Montpensier. | William, Pr. of Orange. | Anne de Montmorency (Constable of France) = Madeleine de Savoie. | W. Cecil, Lord Burleigh. | Eleanor = Clifford, Earl of Cumberland.
| | | | |
Marie = William the Silent. | Jeanne = Louis, 1st D. de La Trémoille. | Anne = Vere, E. of Oxford. | Margaret = Earl of Derby.
| | | |
Charlotte Brabantine de Nassau = Claude, 2nd D. de La Trémoille. | Elizabeth = William, 6th Earl of Derby.
| |
Charlotte de La Trémoille = James, 7th Earl of Derby.

CHARLOTTE DE LA TRÉMOILLE, COUNTESS OF DERBY
From a picture by Vandyke

Madame de La Trémoille and her daughter, arriving only a few days after the departure of the French retinue, came in the very nick of time ; for the French nationality and the Protestant faith of Lady Strange and her mother at once rendered them popular with both sides in the dispute—with the homesick Queen, eager to welcome her fellow-countrywomen, and with King and Parliament ready to trust these new foreigners because of their Protestant religion.

Charles, therefore, encouraged the new arrivals to stay at court, granting them those apartments in St. James's Palace which had recently been vacated by the Queen's French household. But it must have been some time before Lord and Lady Strange and the Duchess Dowager could actually take up their abode in these quarters, on account of their previous occupants' lack of cleanliness, which, we are told, had rendered them totally uninhabitable. Madame de La Trémoille was now appointed Lady of the Queen's Bedchamber, a position in which, after her return to France in October, 1626, she was succeeded by her daughter.

For some months Lady Strange lived in London, and apparently it was not until the autumn of 1627, when her husband was associated with his father, the Earl of Derby, in the lieutenancy of Lancashire and Cheshire, that Lord Strange took his bride to her northern home and introduced her to her father-in-law, who was then living at Chester.

With gracious English kindness and old-world courtesy the Earl received his daughter-in-law, speaking to her in French, calling her " Lady " and " mistress of the house," a position he said he wished no other woman to hold. With her princely residence of Lathom House Lady

Strange was delighted, as well she might be, for the mansion was one of the finest in England. Indeed, at that time everything smiled upon her, and through her husband's devotion the world seemed to have grown " a less difficult place to live in." " He shows me the utmost affection, and God gives us grace to live in much happiness and peace of mind," she wrote. Within a year of their marriage, without a word from his wife, and despite serious financial difficulties in which his family were involved, Lord Strange settled a sum of £2,000 upon his lady. This jointure she considered extremely generous, especially as only a very small part of her own marriage portion had then been paid. It is doubtful whether the whole sum of £50,000 promised in her marriage contract ever reached her. At any rate, her brother, Duke Henry, for some years postponed payment of a great part of it, and Charlotte was constrained to write continually to her mother and sister-in-law expressing her annoyance that she should have brought nothing but expense to a family from whom she had received so much kindness. At one time she even hinted at the suspicion that her brother was trying to possess himself of her fortune, and no doubt she was all the more inclined to distrust him when, in 1628, he abjured his father's faith, and returned to the Church of Rome.

In La Trémoille's excuse it may be urged that, owing to constant civil war, now followed by war with England, his estates had become so encumbered that it was difficult for him to pay either the capital or the interest of his sister's fortune. Moreover, the Duke was certainly not a good business man, for we find him selling to Cardinal Richelieu the domain of L'Ile Bouchard for a sum which barely covered the value of the forest timber, and making

an equally bad bargain when he parted with a portion of the famous forest of Broceliande.[1]

Nevertheless, despite her husband's financial embarrassments, Marie de La Tour was at this very time building that magnificent château of Thouars which, with its four great towers and fine river frontage, dominating the country-side for miles around, belies Henry's plea of poverty and justifies Tallement des Réaux in charging the Duchesse de La Trémoille with ambition. For the aspiring Marie de La Tour determined to copy no less a personage than that great builder of the previous century, Catherine de Médicis, and it was according to the plans which Philibert de l'Orme had drawn for the Tuileries that the Duchess was now building her castle at Thouars. Possibly, however, Marie, more fortunate than Charlotte in the payment of her dowry, may have been using her own marriage portion for the building of the family mansion. The association of her name, rather than that of her husband, with the château would indicate that such was the case, and if so, then the rising of that lordly pile on the steep bank of the river Thouet is not inconsistent with the Duke's protested poverty.

Except for these financial cares, Charlotte's early married years passed peacefully, disturbed only by those natural vicissitudes of life and death which ever attend the destinies of mortals. In 1631, her mother died, but even so heavy a blow was perhaps easier to bear than the vicious courses in which her favourite brother, Frédéric, Comte de Laval, was indulging, in the Netherlands, and in London. In London he had formed a union with a woman of the middle class, a Miss Orpe, who, after having born him several children, inflicted a heavy blow on

[1] Then called Quintin, and afterwards known as the Forêt de Lorges.

the La Trémoille family pride by claiming to be his wife and assuming the title of Comtesse de Laval.

Charlotte first became a mother in January, 1628. In that year her son Charles, afterwards Lord Derby, was born and there followed in rapid succession eight other children, of whom six lived to grow up.[1]

Of English nurses and English nursing Lady Strange had no opinion whatever. The English custom of giving infants the full use of their limbs, instead of binding them tightly on to a cushion, seemed to this Frenchwoman utterly barbarous. And one night she was horrified to find her baby boy of but three days old lying in his cradle sucking his thumb. "Just imagine!" exclaimed this outraged parent in a letter to her sister-in-law. And later to her mother she wrote, "Why, in this country they put infants of a month or six weeks into robes, and I am thought out of my senses because I have not provided any dresses for my baby." No doubt poor Lady Strange found her opinion of English child-nurture only too forcibly confirmed when her baby Charlotte died from being overlaid by her nurse.

Soon after 1631, in order to arrange her mother's affairs, Lady Strange undertook a journey to Holland, hoping, but vainly as it proved, at the same time to exercise some salutary influence over her favourite brother, who was then at the Hague.

Meanwhile, in England, the political horizon was darkening, and every day the country was drawing nearer to civil war.

Lord Strange, despite the high office he held—as well

[1] Charlotte, Henrietta Maria, Catherine, Amelia Anna Sophia, Edward, William and two other sons, Henry Frederick and James, who both died in infancy. See "Stanley Papers," Vol. II., Part III., pp cclxxxviii.—ccxcii.

as being with his father joint lieutenant of Lancashire and Cheshire, he was Chamberlain of Chester and Lord Lieutenant of North Wales—never took any very active part in politics. Only now and again did he attend the meetings of Parliament in London. His tastes were those of the country gentleman ; and he loved to spend his days on the hunting field or in his magnificent houses of Lathom and Knowsley, surrounded by his retainers, entertaining with princely hospitality large companies of friends.

" The air of London disagrees with him," wrote Lady Strange, and glad she was that he did not go there often, for, as she added, " in these times there is always something to fear." Still for such leaders of the aristocracy as were Lord and Lady Strange, it was necessary that sometimes they should put in an appearance at court. And so, in 1630, we find them both figuring in royal pageantry : Charlotte's husband in Ben Jonson's masque, " Love's Triumph through Callipolis," where fifteen lovers ranged themselves seven and seven aside, with the King in the centre, and each with a cupid bearing a lighted torch before him, Lord Strange not inappropriately representing the secure lover ; Charlotte herself, in another masque, was one of a circle of nymphs, who, dressed in white, embroidered with silver, sat round the Queen in her bower.[1]

But in the early years of her motherhood such court festivities were not greatly to Charlotte's taste ; and she preferred to remain quietly at home busily plying her needle over those numerous tiny garments necessary for her increasing household.

Then, in 1642, those war clouds which had so long been

[1] Peter Draper, " The House of Stanley " (1864), 77.

gathering burst, and the King and Parliament took up arms.

For so peaceable a man as Lord Strange the position was extremely difficult. He shared the opinion of Lord Kingston, who to the Parliament emissaries is said to have replied : " When I take arms with the King against the Parliament, or with the Parliament against the King, let a cannon bullet divide me between them." [1]

At first, in his own county of Lancashire, Lord Strange endeavoured to arrange a compromise between the disputants. Then, having failed, he yielded to his wife's influence and declared for the King.

Faithful to her early teaching, and believing strongly in the divine right of kings, to Lady Strange the support of royalty was a religion. Pibrac's line, learnt long ago at Thouars, " Love the state as thou findest it, if it be royal, love royalty," she had never forgotten. And now, putting aside all considerations of personal safety on her own, her husband's and her children's behalf, she urged Lord Strange to join the King, who was then at York.

James Stanley, showing now as always perfect confidence in his wife's judgment, adopted her counsel. But Charlotte, though she might guide the course of her husband's action, could not convert the country gentleman into a general or a soldier ; and throughout the civil war the career of Lord Strange, who, in this year 1642, by his father's death became Earl of Derby, though distinguished by admirable courage and crowned by a martyr's death, was little but a series of misfortunes and failures.

His attempts to raise Lancashire in the King's cause, and to take Manchester and Warrington were attended with ill success. The troops, which he had raised and

[1] See " Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson " (1906), 120.

JAMES STANLEY, EARL OF DERBY
Husband of Charlotte de La Trémoille

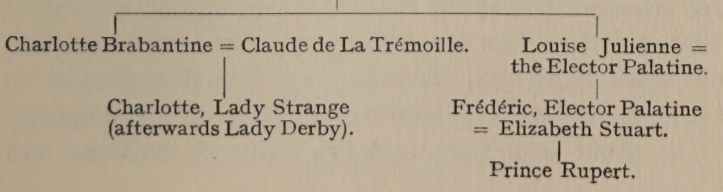
equipped at his own expense, were almost everywhere defeated, and in May, 1643, leaving his army in command of Lord Molyneux, who was even unhappier than his predecessor, Derby, went to York, to beg the Queen to place at his disposal some of the reinforcements she had recently brought from Holland.

Meanwhile Lady Derby dashed off a few hurried lines to her cousin, Prince Rupert,[1] whom she knew to be in Staffordshire, but two days' ride from Lathom, entreating him to come to their aid. "Take pity upon my husband, my children and me," she wrote, "for we are ruined for ever if God and your Highness have not compassion upon us." In a very different tone was this hurried note from the letter, which, a year previously, soon after Prince Rupert's landing at Tynemouth, Charlotte had written to her kinsman. Then she had done no more than request the Prince to use his influence with the King to induce him to send reinforcements to Lancashire.

While Derby was with the Queen at York, he heard that his subjects in the Isle of Man, having revolted from his rule, were negotiating with the Scots. The latter were then planning an invasion of England, in which they hoped to make Man their basis of attack upon the English coast.

In deciding, after some perplexity, to cross over to

[1] Lady Strange was first cousin to Rupert's father, the Elector Palatine.


William of Orange.
Charlotte Brabantine = Claude de La Trémoille.
Louise Julienne = the Elector Palatine.
Charlotte, Lady Strange (afterwards Lady Derby).
Frédéric, Elector Palatine = Elizabeth Stuart.
Prince Rupert.

Man and to leave Lathom to the mercy of the Parliamentarian army then approaching it, Lord Derby must have known he had his wife's approval, for Charlotte would never have allowed her own or her family's safety to stand in the way of the defence of the royal cause. But, indeed, her position was dangerous. For no sooner was the Earl out of the country, than the Governor of Manchester sent an envoy to demand that Lady Derby should submit to his terms or surrender her house. Although Charlotte replied proudly that it suited her to do neither, the reflection that Lathom was but ill armed and provisioned reduced even a La Trémoille to compromise. And so she agreed to give up to the Roundheads such lands as were outside her park wall, stipulating that she should be permitted to remain in peace in her house and to retain a sufficient garrison to protect herself and her household from the insults of the soldiers.

Lady Derby could not have made a wiser move, for in view of the siege, which she wisely saw to be inevitable, she was now able to concentrate all her attention on the defence of her house and grounds, while, by the surrender of her outlying possessions she gained time—a respite of no less than eight months—which she busily occupied in strengthening her garrison, organising her defence, and provisioning Lathom.

We must now describe the position and structure of that mansion, which was about to sustain one of the most famous sieges in English history. Lathom House was so spacious that at one time it is said to have accommodated no less than three Kings and their retinues. Yet, in spite of its size, all writers agree in describing it as one of the most defensible dwellings in the kingdom. Girt about with high walls two yards in thickness, and

protected by nine lofty towers, it lay in a hollow, surrounded by hills, sloping so rapidly as to render it impossible to construct any fortifications on them or to work artillery with impunity from the castle walls. Beyond the ramparts was a moat eight yards wide and two yards deep, bordered by a strong wall of palisades, and only to be crossed from strongly fortified postern gates at the discretion of the garrison. In the midst of the house was a high building, known as the Eagle Tower, and commanding all the rest. The gatehouse was high and strong, with a tower on each side of it. In the towers and on the ramparts were placed eight or nine small pieces of ordnance and some murderers, or large blunderbusses, which moved upon a pivot and a rest.

Throughout her precious eight months' respite, steadily and secretly Lady Derby assembled her garrison and gathered in her provisions, the men came in at night bearing victuals and ammunition; yet, despite all the Countess's efforts, there was a scarcity of the latter throughout the siege, and Lathom's defenders had always to be sparing of their powder and shot.

In the end the garrison numbered 300. These men the Countess divided into six companies under six captains, chosen for their courage and integrity, and each responsible for the training of his company. Over them all Lady Derby appointed as major a Scotsman, one Captain Farmer, who was very skilful in war, having served in the Low Countries.[1] But Captain Farmer, in his turn, received his orders from the Countess, for over household and garrison Charlotte reigned supreme.

So stealthily had all these works been carried out that the Parliamentarian troops, who, under Colonel Rigby,

[1] He afterwards fell at Marston Moor.

were constantly harrying the neighbourhood, had not the remotest idea of the increase in the garrison, nor of the extent of the defences of Lathom House.

Some idea, however, of what had been taking place dawned upon the Roundhead general when, early in February, 1644, a reconnoitring party, having approached to within gunshot of the walls, was welcomed with such a volley of musketry that several of their number were slain and one was taken prisoner. On the following day, February 24th, a council of war was held at Manchester, and it was decided to open a regular attack on the mansion. The next day being Sunday, the pulpits of Wigan, the nearest town to Lathom and but six miles distant, resounded with anathemas hurled at "the wicked woman of Babylon," who was opposing the progress "of the Lord's chosen people," and one preacher, converting his sermon into an announcement of the siege, which was to open on the morrow, blew a trumpet blast from the fiftieth chapter of Jeremiah, calling on the people to put themselves "in array against Babylon round about": "all ye that bend the bow," he cried, "shoot at her, spare no arrows; for she hath sinned against the Lord."

The Puritan preacher doubtless hoped a very few Sabbaths hence to preach another sermon, taking for his text the next verse: "Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it is the vengeance of the Lord: take vengeance upon her."

But "the woman of Babylon" was not to be so easily vanquished; and as long as Charlotte de La Trémoille commanded within the walls of Lathom, they stood firm against the forces of the Parliament.

Of the details of this memorable siege we are fortunate

in possessing a graphic account written by an eye-witness, one of the Countess's little band of defenders. This narrative is to be found printed at the end of Bohn's edition of the "Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson." Two manuscripts of it still exist, one in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford,[1] another among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum.[2] Which of Lathom's defenders wrote this story is a question which has been much disputed. It may have been Edward Halsall, a youth of only seventeen at the time of the siege, or, more probably, a maturer soldier, Chissenhall by name, one of Charlotte's captains.[3]

It was on Tuesday, February 27th,[4] that Lathom was completely invested. Then the troops of Sir Thomas Fairfax encamped round about the house at the distance of a mile or two. But before the actual attack began, a week passed in negotiations between Lady Derby and Parliamentary envoys. One set of proposals after another she refused, replying finally that she declined all their articles, and was truly happy in that they refused hers, for she would rather hazard her life than offer the like again. Then she added defiantly that, though a woman and a foreigner, divorced from her friends and robbed of her estate, she was ready to receive the enemy's utmost violence, trusting in God for protection and deliverance.

The next morning[5] when the Countess's household awoke, it seemed to them that the siege had begun in real earnest. For during the night, at about a musket-shot's distance from the house, on the sloping ground

[1] A Wood MS. d. 16.
[2] No. 2043.
[3] Another account of the siege may be found in the "Memoirs of John Seacombe" (1821).
[4] N.S. March 7th.
[5] March 6th O.S.

surrounding it, the Parliamentarians had been throwing up earthworks for the protection of the ordnance which were to fire upon the towers of Lathom. These earthworks, during the following days, were continued by the people of the country-side, who, much against their will, had been pressed into the Parliamentarian service by Fairfax and his colonels. Apparently the sympathies of these country folk were royalist. And although, instigated by Fairfax, six of them waited on Lady Derby to represent to her that it would be for their benefit if she would consent to treat with the Parliamentarians, when she explained to them her reasons for resisting, they went away crying: "God save the King and the Earl of Derby!"

Fairfax, however, still delayed to open the attack, either because he regarded the siege as hopeless, or because this chivalrous general disliked making war upon a woman. So, on Monday, March 11th, he renewed negotiations, which proved as fruitless as the earlier ones had been. And on the following day it was the besieged who opened the attack. A hundred foot, supported by twelve horsemen, boldly sallied forth from Lathom gates, went right up to the enemy's works without firing a shot, then, proceeding to fire, drove them from their holes, slaying thirty, taking forty arms, one drum and six prisoners without any injury to themselves.

These sallies repeated on succeeding days inflicted great hurt on the besiegers, and also unhappily on the poor country folk at work in the trenches. The enemy replied by attempting to bombard the house. But the configuration of the land rendered their cannon useless.

"On Tuesday night," writes our eye-witness, "they brought up one piece of cannon. On Wednesday morning

they gave us some sport. They then played their cannon three shots, the ball a twenty-four pounder. They first tried the wall, which, being found proof without yielding or showing the least impression (*sic*), they afterwards shot higher to beat down the pinnacles or turrets, or else to please the women that came to see the spectacle."

Dismayed by the failure of his bombardment, Fairfax made another attempt to bring the Countess to terms, and this time he thought to possess an infallible argument in a letter from Lord Derby which had just reached him. The Earl had returned from Man, and, alarmed by the news of his wife's danger, he asked Fairfax to permit the Countess and her children, should it seem good to her, to leave the house and proceed to a place of safety. But Lord Derby, when he penned that request, had no idea of his wife's spirit. To such a Minerva " it did not seem good " to leave her home in the hour of danger, for Charlotte knew full well that she was the soul of the defence, and that in her absence Lathom would soon be taken. So, thanking Sir Thomas for his courtesy, the Countess professed her willingness to adopt her Lord's suggestion, but only when she herself was fully persuaded that such really was his pleasure. The blockade was then resumed. But soon afterwards, Lady Derby, taking advantage of a sally, contrived to get two messengers through the enemy's lines, one bearing a letter to her husband, and the other one to Prince Rupert. The latter was written in a very different tone from the despairing request she had addressed to her kinsman but a year ago. By now Charlotte de La Trémoille had proved her mettle, and this, her third appeal to her cousin, reveals a serenity and strength which is truly admirable in a lone woman and a foreigner at the

head of a small garrison, besieged by an army of 3,000 men.

"Sir," wrote the Countess, "I make bold to write these lines to your Highness to implore you very humbly to be so kind as to converse with the bearer of this letter touching the condition of this country, which has great need of your presence, as your Highness will be able to gather for yourself from the words of my messenger, in whose hands I leave it, while I entreat you believe me more than any one, Sir, the very humble and very obedient and very faithful servant of your Highness.

"C. DE TRÉMAILLE."[1]

Though the Countess was thus reduced to imploring aid from her husband and her cousin, the besiegers were beginning to despair of ever forcing her to surrender by human means at any rate. And so they resolved to beseech the divinity to intervene on their side. "All ministers and other well-affected persons" of Lancashire were called upon to commend the Parliament's case to God. Meanwhile, those "well-affected" persons who had been bombarding Lathom desisted from action, in order, as our eye-witness puts it, "to sleep out four days in the pious exercises of prayer and supplication."

The Countess and her household used this respite to prepare a somewhat rude awakening for these pious sleepers. And, on April 10th, the besieged sallied forth and attacked the enemy's lines with such vigour, that all their cannon were nailed, fifty of their men slain, sixty arms taken, with one set of colours and three drums, all with the loss to the assailants of only one man. The besiegers' most formidable weapon, however, Charlotte's men failed to damage: the Parliamentarians had recently

[1] Charlotte's usual way of writing her name.

brought from London a huge mortar, which was a form of artillery but newly invented. The Lathom soldiers did their very best to silence this redoubtable engine of war; they nailed it, and battered it with smith's hammers, but all to no purpose, for its mouth was too wide to be stopped. And for the next thirteen days the mortar was destined to inflict considerable damage on the house and its occupants, but not nearly such serious injury as it might have caused had the firing of it been properly understood. Not even Lathom's stout ramparts could have stood firm against shells and stones fifty-three inches in diameter, had they been fired so as to describe that peculiar curve which rendered the mortar the most deadly engine of attack upon a house lying in a hollow like that now being assailed. The inexperience of the gunners, however, caused the balls generally to follow a horizontal direction, and only now and again to do any serious damage. Once a ball fell into the dining-room where the Countess and her children sat at meat, and twice shells entered Lady Derby's bed-chamber; but almost miraculously on neither occasion was anyone hurt. And it was only with great difficulty that the Countess could be persuaded to change her room, which seemed especially open to attack, for once previously, before the mortar's arrival, a saker bullet had come in through her window.

But nothing dismayed the Countess or shook her determination to continue her resistance. Never would she yield as long as a roof remained over her head, she protested. And at length Fairfax, who was badly wanted in other parts of the country, grew tired of so unprofitable an enterprise. On April 24th he marched off, leaving the conduct of the siege to Colonel Rigby, a

gruff, uncouth attorney, very different from his courteous and cultured superior.

In keeping with Rigby's character was the insolent tone of the message by which, on the day after his general's departure, he called upon Lady Derby to surrender before eight o'clock on the following afternoon. But in the Countess, Rigby had met his match. Haughtily tearing up the Colonel's missive, she told his messenger that as a reward for his pains he deserved to be hanged at her gates, and that to the traitor who sent him he might say that neither house, goods nor persons should he have, that rather than fall into his hands she would set fire to the place and consign herself, her children and her soldiers to the flames.

These were bold words; and on hearing them the garrison shouted: "We will die for his Majesty and your Honour. God save the King!"

For herself, Lady Derby knew no fear. Yet, despite the brave defiance she had sent to Rigby, there were moments when she trembled for her children. "The little ladies," writes the eye-witness, "had stomachs to digest cannon, but they, no more than the stoutest soldiers, had hearts for grenades."

So, no sooner was the messenger departed than the Countess summoned a council of war, and told her captains that something must be done to stop the mouth of the mortar. As the result of these deliberations another sally was made, which was to prove the boldest and bravest of the siege. At four o'clock the next morning, while the besiegers were asleep, Lady Derby herself, with most of her garrison, issued forth from the gates. They approached the mortar and took possession of it; then the soldiers, encouraged by their gallant

Countess, dragged it inside the ramparts. There in the courtyard, like a dead lion, lay the monster that had frightened the brave defenders of Lathom from their meat and sleep. "Everyone had his eye and his foot upon it, shouting and rejoicing as merrily as they used to do with their ale and their bagpipes."

And even Charlotte de La Trémoille, never very joyful at the best of times, and grimmer than ever now after eight anxious weeks of suffering—even Charlotte was jubilant, and in her gladness she instructed her chaplain, the Reverend Mr. Rutter, to hold a public thanksgiving.

Rigby, too, had arranged a thanksgiving for that day, and had invited the people of the countryside to come and see the walls of Lathom House fall beneath the mortar's volleys of shot and shell; but now his great battering-ram lay silent and secure within the enemy's gates, and there remained for the Colonel nothing but rage and mortification. In despair he appealed to the County Committee to send him reinforcements. "We are obliged to drive them back as often as five or six times in the same night," he wrote. "These constant alarms, the strength of the garrison, and the numerous losses we have had, oblige the soldiers to guard the trenches sometimes two nights running. My son does this duty as well as the youngest officer. And for my own part, I am ready to sink under the weight, having worked beyond my strength."

In response to Rigby's request Colonel Holland was sent from Manchester with reinforcements. But these new troops seem to have been singularly ineffective; and we read that after the mortar's capture until the raising of the siege on May 26th, the garrison enjoyed a

continued calm, so that they were scarce sensible of a siege save for the restraint put upon their liberty.

On May 23rd Rigby sent another and the last of his insolent messages, to which Lady Derby replied as defiantly as before, that unless the enemy would treat with her lord, they should never have her or any of her friends alive.

The Countess, when she sent this defiance, had no idea that her lord was then close at hand. But that very night one of her scouts returned to Lathom and told how Prince Rupert was in Cheshire, and with him the Earl, and that they were coming to raise the siege.

From more than one quarter Prince Rupert had been urged to go to his gallant cousin's rescue ; her husband had implored the Prince's help, so had the Royalist commander of Chester, and finally the King himself wrote that while desirous not to interfere with his nephew's plans, he would be glad to learn that the Countess of Derby was out of danger. Thus it fell out that the Prince, having been joined by Derby, was now marching to Lathom.

The news that on May 25th Rupert had taken Stockport reached the besiegers on the following day. That night they broke up their camp and vanished in the darkness, so quietly that the inhabitants of Lathom knew nothing of their departure ; and the Countess, when she awoke on the morning of the 27th, beheld with immense astonishment and unspeakable relief that the enemy had departed.

On the evening of the following day the Earl and his Countess were reunited. Between the Parliamentarians' flight and Derby's return had intervened the Royalist capture of Bolton-le-Moors, where Stanley and Rupert wreaked their revenge on Rigby and his men for all the

suffering they had for eight weeks been inflicting on the Countess and her children.

The Earl, on his return to his damaged home and to his brave wife and children, had been preceded by Sir Richard Crane, who came on the part of Prince Rupert to lay at his courageous cousin's feet twenty-two flags captured from the enemy at Bolton, and to announce to her that the Prince was pleased to accept her invitation to spend a few days at Lathom on his way to York. Charlotte, therefore, made haste to prepare to receive her princely cousin with as good cheer as might be, in a house strangely shattered by the siege, and still bearing traces of the work of the enemy's cannon.

Rupert was then at the height of his renown. His arrogance and hot-headedness had not yet alienated the cavaliers, who, in this year 1644, regarded the King's nephew as almost invincible. Lady Derby and her cousin must have been well acquainted by repute, for it was the Prince's mother, the fascinating Elizabeth Stuart, who, at the court of the Hague, had arranged Charlotte's marriage; but at that time young Rupert himself was away at the University of Leyden. Probably, therefore, the cousins never met until that glad summer day, when the Prince of five-and-twenty, the handsomest and bravest commander of the time, rode proudly through the battered gates of Lathom to congratulate, in a voice half broken with emotion, his valiant kinswoman on the glorious victory she had won.

Many a noble and many a royal guest had in times past been royally entertained beneath Lathom's hospitable roof. But now, with the resources of her house all wasted by the siege, with her jewels pawned to raise money for the defence of her home, with robes of state

laid aside, and triumphs of costume and drapery forgotten, Charlotte found court ceremonial impossible. Yet never was guest welcomed with greater rejoicing, and never did more fervent thanksgivings rise from the chapel than on the occasion of Prince Rupert's coming to Lathom.

During this brief visit the Prince was busily occupied in arranging for the repair and strengthening of the fortifications of the house, and in rewarding the officers who had so gallantly served their King and their lady. Before his departure, Rupert advised the Countess to retire with her children to the Isle of Man, enjoining her to take great care of her sons and daughters, for, he said, "the children of such a father and mother will one day render to their King as much service as yours has received from you."

It was not, however, until more than three weeks after the Royalist rout at Marston Moor that Charlotte adopted her cousin's counsel. The battle was fought on July 2nd; and on the 30th Lady Derby and her children crossed over to the Isle of Man. Whether the Earl accompanied them we do not know. But, if he did, his stay in the island was brief, for in September we find him back at Lathom, which was again being besieged by the Parliamentarians. The siege dragged on for over a year. Not until December, 1645, did the gallant garrison surrender. By that time the Earl had rejoined his family in the Isle of Man, and it was there that they heard of the wanton destruction of their beautiful home, how it had been razed to the ground, all its valuable furniture and works of art scattered or demolished, and only a few timber buildings left to mark the site of the lordly Lathom.

For the Earl and Countess of Derby, as indeed for all Royalists, the next five years, from Lathom's fall in December, 1644, until the King's execution in January, 1649, were full of suffering and anxiety. Most of this time the Countess spent in the Isle of Man. And from her letters to her sister-in-law, Marie de la Tour, Duchesse de La Trémoille, we learn that to grief over national affairs were added family troubles. These arose chiefly from the conduct of her eldest son, Charles, Lord Strange, then a youth of eighteen. Only a year after Lathom's fall, Charles departed secretly from the Isle of Man, and, crossing over to Ireland, made his way thence to Paris. He left behind him letters saying that he was going to his Aunt, the Duchess. And to her Lady Derby wrote, imploring that for her sister's sake she would receive the truant kindly and be a mother to him, "all the more," she adds, "because what he has done has offended Monsieur his father and me. If he obeys you he will the more readily obtain our pardon."

Such kindness the Countess was entitled to expect from her sister-in-law; for, as we shall see in the next chapter, many years earlier the Derbys had hospitably received into their London house the Duchess's own runaway son, Henri Charles de La Trémoille. Marie de la Tour, therefore, was only too willing to grant her sister's request, winning her gratitude and that of her husband, who wrote to Madame de La Trémoille that he could never sufficiently thank her for the care she had deigned to take of his truant son.

Their first-born's evasion must have been a great disappointment to Lord and Lady Derby. For, from his cradle they had spared no pains, by dint of careful tuition and advice, to fit him for the exalted position he was one

day to occupy. Among the Stanley papers is a volume[1] of rules and aphorisms written by Lord Derby for his son's benefit, and dealing with every phase of behaviour, and every vicissitude of life, health, table manners, expenditure, the regulations of a household, and especially the choice of a wife. "Choose not a dwarf or a fool," Charles was advised, "for the children of one will be pigmies, and the other your disgrace by a continual clack; there is nothing more fulsome than a she-fool." Looking still further ahead, the Earl admonishes his son to bring up his children with "learning and obedience, yet without austerity, praising them openly, and reprehending them secretly."

But, above all things, Charles is enjoined to cultivate home life and to avoid travel, especially in Italy, because in that country "is nothing to be learned but pride, vice, luxury, and atheism, with a few useless words of no profit." "For words," the Earl insists, "you have no need to travel, your mother having conferred on you the benefit of her language."

But travel was the one thing Charles Stanley desired, partly, no doubt, in order to escape from his father's persistent aphorisms and his tutor's virtuous precepts; and so, eluding the vigilance of the learned Mr. Rutter, he exchanged the monotony of life in the Isle of Man for the livelier atmosphere of Paris.

Eventually Lord Strange was to win his father's forgiveness, and to prove a loyal and affectionate son. But with his mother henceforth he was never on the best of terms. Charlotte could not recover from her disappointment at her boy's truancy. To her sister-in-law she

[1] Part III., 1867, 42 *et seq.* "The Stanley Papers" have been published by the Chetham Society.

wrote of him as " a useless creature," and one from whom all she could expect was that he should eschew evil practices, and avoid following the example of his uncle, the Comte de Laval, Charlotte's favourite brother, who three years earlier had died from wounds received in a duel.[1] Nevertheless, for this "useless creature" Lady Derby was careful to draw up a programme of studies, to pursue him with reams of judicious advice, to scheme for his worldly advancement by asking the Duchess to present him to Henrietta Maria and the Prince of Wales, who were then in Paris, and to plan sending him to learn the art of war from his kinsman, the great Turenne.

Soon, however, the Countess's attention was diverted from her truant son by a new danger which threatened her husband. Towards the close of 1646 negotiations were in progress between the Scots, whom the King had joined at Newcastle, and the members of the Long Parliament. As part of the projected settlement it was proposed to proclaim an amnesty for the King's supporters ; but from that pardon certain eminent Royalists were to be excluded, and among them was Lord Derby.

With her usual indefatigable energy, the Countess resolved to undertake the hazardous and difficult journey to London, there to petition the Parliament to include her husband in the Amnesty Bill. Having waited long and anxiously for a passport, she received it in mid-January. And then, in tempestuous weather, and embarking in an unseaworthy boat, Lady Derby bade farewell to her fearful husband and children, and after a forty-eight hours' passage, landed safely in Lancashire.

[1] Fought at Venice with Le Coudray Montpensier in February, 1642.

There she spent a fortnight procuring money for her further journey. On March 10th she was at Chelsea; and in London or its neighbourhood she remained for over a year negotiating with the Parliament, and not without success.

Some weeks after her arrival she was able to write to her sister-in-law, "that the Lords have already struck out Monsieur your brother-in-law's name from the list of exceptions. . . . It passed without any opposition, but the Commons have done nothing, as it has not been sent to them yet from the Lords; but I am encouraged to hope that, with God's help, there will be no difficulty."

In the autumn of this year, probably owing to Lady Derby's intervention, one-fifth of the Earl's estate, which had been confiscated by Parliament, was granted to his children. The Manor of Knowsley, with its house, lands and appurtenances, was included in this restoration, and thither the Earl sent his daughters, Catherine and Amelia, to reside at Knowsley under the protection of Sir Thomas Fairfax, in order that they might keep possession of the house and receive that part of their father's income which Parliament had granted them.

It was in September, 1647, that Lady Derby twice visited the King at Hampton Court. Of her second visit she writes: "He is hopeful about his affairs. The Princes, his children, see him two or three times a week; they are living only three miles from Hampton Court, the finest of his houses."

While thus earnestly engaged in matters which so vitally concerned her husband and children, Lady Derby never lost interest in the doings of her relatives in France. Her heart swelled with family pride when her brother,

CHARLOTTE DE LA TRÉMOILLE, COUNTESS OF DERBY, WITH HER HUSBAND AND THEIR DAUGHTER, CATHERINE

From a picture by Vandyke, in the collection of the Earl of Clarendon

Duke Henry, at the Council of Munster[1] in 1648, laid claim to the kingdom of Naples.[2]

But her pride fell when, shortly afterwards, her dead brother's mistress, Miss Orpe, claimed his estate and assumed the title of Comtesse de Laval.[3] Miss Orpe was connected with the English Royal household, and in the suit she brought against the house of La Trémoille was protected by Queen Henrietta Maria. Despite this powerful patronage, however, "that woman," as the Countess described the plaintiff, lost her case, and the Laval estate was divided between Count Frédéric's brother and sister.

While she was in London, the Countess was writing to her sister-in-law long lamentations over the woeful plight to which the Parliament's government had reduced her adopted land. "On every hand," she wrote, "were discontent and disagreement, falling out between Lords and Commons, and between the Parliament and the army, but worst of all the abuse of religion, the disregard of God's commandments, books printed which deny the Holy Ghost, the Lord's Prayer neglected, the Sacraments administered according to the fancy of the administrator, any one allowed to preach, even women, baptism thought nothing of, and not administered to children, and worse things which make all who have any religion left shudder."

In the spring of 1648 lack of pence compelled Lady

[1] Summoned to adjust the conflicting demands of the numerous Princes engaged in the Thirty Years War.

[2] Through his ancestress, Anne de Laval, granddaughter of Frédéric, King of Naples, and wife of François de La Trémoille (see *ante*, p. 87). For two centuries the kings of France had claimed to be kings of Naples. They now abrogated their claim in favour of the La Trémoilles, who continued to assert theirs down to the end of the eighteenth century. And in virtue of this pretended right the eldest son of the house henceforth (until 1815) was styled Prince de Tarente. See "Les La Trémoilles pendant cinq Siècles," IV., 125 *et seq.*

[3] See *ante*, p. 134.

Derby to leave London without having obtained her object, for the Commons had not yet undertaken to include her husband in the Amnesty Bill. But she hoped much from the divisions among her enemies. These hopes were destined to disappointment.

On her way back to the Isle of Man, the Countess visited her daughters at Knowsley. In February, 1649, she was back again in the Island. And there she and her husband heard of the King's execution.

For this event they had long been prepared. Years before, at the time of Strafford's death,[1] Lord Derby had described the Parliament as "wolves, that, after their first tasting of man's blood, grow bold, and mad of more . . . worse than beasts, they make noe difference of drinkes; for they now become ravenous of royall blood."

It was not until six months after the King's execution that Lady Derby's petition to the Parliament received any definite answer. Then, on July 12th, Lieutenant-General Ireton, on the Parliament's behalf, proposed to the Earl, that in return for the peaceable possession of half his estate, Derby should surrender the Isle of Man.

The vehemence with which the Earl rejected this proposal suggests that Charlotte was responsible for the terms of his reply, which were remarkably like those in which she had been wont to answer the envoys of Fairfax and Rigby during the siege of Lathom.

"I scorn your proffers, disdain your favour, and abhor your treason," wrote the Earl, "and am so far from delivering up this Island to your advantage, that I will keep it to the utmost of my power and your destruction. Take this for your final answer and forbear any further solicitations; for if you trouble me with any more

[1] May, 1641.

messages on this occasion I will burn the paper and hang the bearer. This is the immutable resolution and shall be the undoubted practice of him who accounts it his chiefest glory to be

" His Majesty's most loyal and obedient servant,
" DERBY." [1]

This virulent defiance having convinced the Parliament of the vanity of all attempts at negotiation, they then proceeded by force of arms to try and conquer the Island.

But for some time the Earl had been collecting and equipping a fleet, and with this ever active and efficient little navy, he continued to guard the Island from Roundhead attacks, so that Man became a sure and safe refuge for Royalist refugees, whom, in spite of their poverty, Lord and Lady Derby hospitably entertained at Castle Rushen.

The story of these years, of the straits to which the Countess was reduced, even in order to clothe her waiting-women, of the hair-breadth escapes of her husband and his retainers from the guns of the Parliament's vessels constantly hovering round the coast, forms one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of Charlotte de La Trémoille's romantic career.

So much care and anxiety now had their natural effect even on the Countess's vigorous constitution; she fell ill, and for a time her life was despaired of. So beset was she by dangers and difficulties that, on her recovery from seven weeks' illness, she wrote to her sister-in-law that " had it been God's will," she would have been well satisfied to quit " this miserable world." At the same time she mourns over the condition of her adopted land, in which the sects were increasing daily,

[1] " Stanley Papers," Part III. Vol. I., cliv.

where the Koran was printed with permission, where it was common to deny both God and Jesus Christ, and to believe only in the spirit of the Universe, where baptism was made a joke of, where a Puritan minister maintained openly in church that there was no greater divinity than himself, and that, as he was not God, therefore God did not exist.

In another letter Lady Derby related how one of the Earl's retainers, returning from Scotland, described the burning of sorcerers who declared that they were always with Cromwell when he fought. Another, in prison at Edinburgh, affirmed that he had been present when Cromwell renounced his baptismal vow.

Many other equally slanderous tales did the Countess repeat for the benefit of her sister-in-law. Perhaps some of them were not without foundation. Everyone knows that during that century hundreds of witches and wizards were burnt, especially in Scotland, and that under torture no statement was too wild for those poor wretches to make. But the majority of these stories were undoubtedly mere inventions, chiefly significant as showing that Cavaliers and Puritans, like many politicians of the present day, were only too eager to credit the most absurd tales told at the expense of their opponents.

After awhile the Parliament, having failed to capture the Isle of Man by their war vessels, attempted to wring its surrender from the stalwart Derby by ill-treatment of his daughters. Catherine and Amelia were removed from Knowsley to Liverpool, where they were lodged in a miserable, ill-ventilated house, strictly watched, and not allowed to go a few miles from their abode without permission. While the Parliament thus held the Earl's daughters as hostages, they sent word to their father that

if he would surrender Man the ladies should be set at liberty. But this stratagem was no more successful than previous devices had been in bringing the proud Earl to submission ; and Derby answered that his children should never be redeemed by disloyalty.

While doubtless approving of her husband's reply, Charlotte's maternal heart bled at the news of her daughters' sufferings. "I hear they are bearing it bravely," she wrote to the Duchess, "and I have no doubt this is true of the eldest ; but my daughter Amelia is delicate and timid, and is undergoing medical treatment by order of Monsieur de Mayerne." [1]

In the midst of her fears for her daughters another blow fell upon Lady Derby. She heard that her son, who was in Holland, was about to marry a Mdlle. Rupa, a young German lady, high born but penniless. In the present state of the family fortunes such a match was not to be dreamt of. And to prevent it the Countess immediately set out for Holland, by way of Scotland. But there her progress was arrested. For, landing in Kirkcudbright, she found herself in the presence of an English army which was marching to Dunbar ; then she discovered that without a passport it was impossible for her to continue her journey ; and, after a fortnight spent in vainly endeavouring to obtain one, she was reduced to returning to Man.

Lord Strange married Mdlle. Rupa, and then attempted to compensate for his wife's lack of fortune by obtaining from the Parliament a portion of his father's confiscated revenue. With this object Lord and Lady Strange came to London. Their negotiations with the Parliament,

[1] Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne (1573—1655), a Genevese who had been physician to Charles I.

which Lord Derby described as " going over to the rebels," drove their parents into a fury, and no doubt confirmed the Countess in her opinion that her eldest son was but a " useless creature."

During her brief stay in Scotland Lady Derby had waited on Charles II., whom she found, so she wrote to the Duchess, behaving with wonderful prudence. Indignantly the Countess rejected the charge then being spread abroad that her King was a Catholic. " He is as true a Protestant as ever," she wrote. But she pitied him in being obliged to listen to horrible sermons against his father, delivered by persons whom she called " atheists."

Charlotte's loyalty must have been severely tested when, a few months later, she heard that on his coronation at Scone [1] Charles had subscribed to the Solemn League and Covenant, thereby admitting his father's sin, and his mother's idolatry.

The King himself sent word to Lord Derby that the Scotch Presbyterians had determined to make common cause with English Royalists, and to restore him to the throne. These tidings Charlotte and her husband received with great joy. And henceforth the Earl held himself in readiness to join his sovereign whenever the summons should reach him. Meanwhile, throughout the summer of 1651, Derby busied himself in organising his gallant little navy, and in completing the defences of Man, so that in his absence the Island might continue to defy the enemy.

Finally, in August, came the call which for ever was to part Lady Derby from the devoted husband who for twenty-five years had been her lover and friend.

[1] January, 1651.

For a while storms delayed his departure. "The wind is unmercifully cruel," wrote his brave daughter Henrietta Maria. But it must have been with mixed feelings of impatience and apprehension that she and her mother listened to the howling of the tempest round the walls of Castle Rushen.

"It begins to be fair," she adds in the same letter. And on August 12th, Derby wrote: "my little vessel will be ready this tide."

Three days later he was in Lancashire. Then began a period of anxious suspense for Lady Derby and her children left behind in the Isle of Man.

Of her husband's desperate adventures from his landing in Lancashire, until his execution at Bolton-le-Moors, Charlotte knew nothing at the time. Of his successful raising of the county for the King, of his grievous wounding and defeat at Wigan, of his escape in disguise to Worcester, of his saving the King's life after the battle, of the exhausted Earl's own surrender to the Parliamentarians, of his imprisonment, trial and execution, not one word penetrated to his wife in her island home until after Derby had breathed his last on the scaffold—of all these sad happenings she heard nothing until the tidings reached her of her husband's death at Bolton on October 15th.

When and how news of this tragedy first came to the Countess we do not know. But that some time or other the Earl's trusty chaplain, the Reverend Humphrey Baggerley, performed his lord's behest by delivering his letters to Charlotte, and telling her of the Earl's last moments, we do not doubt. From Baggerley, Lady Derby must have learnt that her lord had died bravely for God, the King, and the laws. that shortly before the

end he had spoken of his honour and respect for his lady, and of her goodness as a wife, that he had remembered his eldest daughter, "Mall,"[1] and his sons,[2] "the honourable little masters," and that but a few hours before his execution he had drunk a cup of beer to his lady and their children.

In the two letters which the chaplain delivered to Lady Derby, the Earl took a tender pathetic farewell of his wife and children. To his lady, referring to earlier letters, which likewise did not reach her until after his death, he wrote:

"My dear Heart, I have heretofore sent you comfortable lines, but, alas! I have now no word of comfort, saving to our last and best refuge, which is Almighty God, to Whose will we must submit. . . . I conjure you, my dearest heart, by all those graces which God hath given you, that you exercise your patience in this great and strange trial. If harm come to you, then I am dead indeed, and until then I shall live in you, who are truly the best part of myself. When there is no such as I in being, then look upon yourself and my poor children; then take comfort, and God will bless you."[3]

To his "poor children," to "little Mall, Ned and Billy," of whom he had often thought and spoken during his captivity, the Earl wrote[4]:

"I remember well how sad you were to part with me, but now I fear your sorrow will be greatly increased to be

[1] Derby's two younger daughters, Catherine and Amelia, the Parliament had established at Chester shortly before their father had been brought there as a prisoner. The Stanley girls were permitted to visit the Earl in prison and to bid him farewell on his way to execution.

[2] As soon as he heard of his father's imprisonment, the Earl's eldest son, Lord Strange, had, with his wife, come to Chester. And there he and Lady Strange were completely reconciled to their father.

[3] See Seacombe, *op. cit.*, 185—186.

[4] *Ibid.*, 186—187.

informed that you can never see me more in this world; but I charge you all to strive against too great a sorrow: you are all of you of that temper that it would do you harm. My desires and prayers to God are, that you may have a happy life. Let it be as holy a life as you can, and as little sinful as you can avoid or prevent. I can well now give you that counsel, having in myself at this time so great a sense of the vanities of my life, which fill my soul with sorrow; yet I rejoice to remember that when I have blessed God with pious devotion, it has been most delightful to my soul, and must be my eternal happiness.

"Love the Archdeacon,[1] he will give you good precepts. Obey your mother with cheerfulness and grieve her not; for she is your example, your nursery, your counsellor, your all under God. There never was, nor ever can be a more deserving person. I am called away, and this is the last I shall write to you. The Lord my God bless and guard you from all evil. So prays your father at this time, whose sorrow is inexorable to part with Mall, Ned and Billy. Remember,

"DERBY."

Lord Derby had anticipated that after his death his gallant wife would have great difficulty in maintaining her defence of Man. And in more than one of his letters the Earl had advised Charlotte to surrender the Island to the Parliament on the best terms she could secure for herself, her children and the inhabitants, and then to retire with her family to some place remote from the war. Lord Derby's fears proved to have been well justified. But Charlotte de La Trémoille's stout heart could not bring itself to follow her lord's counsel. And when two of the Parliament's colonels, Duckenfield and Birch, with ten ships of war, approaching the Island, summoned the

[1] Mr. Rutter, who had been tutor to Lord Strange.

Countess to surrender, Lady Derby, as in Lathom days, boldly bade them defiance.[1]

Into the Countess's mouth on this occasion, Scott, in "Peveril of the Peak," puts just such words as she might actually have spoken. Referring to this event in after years, he makes her say:—

"I would have held . . . that island against the knaves as long as the sea continued to flow around it. Till the shoals which surround it had become safe anchorage, till its precipices had melted beneath the sunshine, till of all its strong abodes and castles not one stone remained upon another, would I have defended against these villainous hypocritical rebels my dear husband's hereditary dominions."

Vain were all Lady Derby's courage and heroism. The Island was undermined by treason. Treachery did what force could never have accomplished. The Governor of Man, William Christian, in whom the late Earl had placed implicit confidence, was in league with the enemy. Led by Christian, the very night after the arrival of the Parliament's ships, the Manxmen rose in a body, seized Castle Rushen, where Lady Derby was then residing, and prepared to hand the whole island over to the enemy.

Meanwhile, in the other fortress of Man, in Peel Castle, which at high tide formed an island of itself, there still held out a brave body of men commanded by a gallant royalist, Sir Philip Musgrave. The Parliamentarians, in negotiating with the captive Countess, offered her life, liberty, and all her goods if she would abandon this little band of defenders unconditionally into their hands. But

[1] It is doubtful whether at that time Lady Derby had received her husband's letters. It may have been those Parliamentarian generals who sent her news of the Earl's death.

those who made such a proposal little knew the loyalty of a La Trémoille. Their offer Lady Derby rejected with the utmost scorn, replying that she preferred to remain a prisoner rather than abandon a single man who had been faithful to her. So with the greater part of her personal property in the Island, the Countess purchased the lives of Musgrave and his men.[1] Out of all her goods, 400 crowns worth of silver plate was allowed her, just sufficient to pay for the passage to England of herself and her children.

Under Musgrave's escort, Lady Derby and her family, after a stormy crossing, landed at Beaumaris. There they bade farewell to their brave comrade ; Sir Philip took his way to the north, while the Countess and her children, we presume, journeyed to London. For it was there that in the following March, Lady Derby resumed her correspondence with her sister-in-law, in a letter[2] from which we obtain our only reliable information concerning her departure from Man.

During the eight years between her arrival in England and the King's restoration, Lady Derby was chiefly concerned in endeavouring to rescue from Parliamentarian confiscators the remnants of her own and her husband's fortune, in marrying her daughters, and in providing for the advancement of her two younger sons.

After three years she succeeded in recovering her own dowry and the estate of Knowsley, whither she retired, glad to leave London, where she found living too expensive for her very limited resources.

The year after the surrender of Man, Lady Derby

[1] This agreement was signed on November 11th, 1651.

[2] This letter contradicts the statement made by more than one authority that for several months after the Island's surrender the Countess was kept a prisoner in Man.

married her second daughter, Catherine, to Henry Pierrepont, Marquis of Dorchester, a middle-aged widower, very rich, but one of the most eccentric persons of his time. Dorchester, by adopting the medical profession, had scandalised the nobility and terrified all his friends and relatives for whom he insisted on prescribing. By the time Catherine Stanley married him he was said to have already killed his daughter, his coachman, and five other patients. In the end he himself is said to have died of his physic. But unfortunately for Catherine that Nemesis did not overtake him until she had been ten years in her grave. Yet a naturally strong constitution had enabled her long to resist her husband's medicaments, and, victimised by his extravagant whims and irascible disposition, to live through twenty-seven years of married misery.

Lady Derby, who at first exulted in procuring so wealthy a husband for her daughter, only three months after the wedding, realised that she had made a hideous mistake. Therefore in mating her two other daughters she avoided eccentricities. Henrietta Maria and Amelia were lucky in being united to quite commonplace persons. Henrietta's spouse, William Wentworth, second son of the famous Earl of Strafford, inherited none of his father's gifts and probably proved a placid husband.

Amelia, a clever and attractive brunette, "with an equal and patient temper," in her marriage with John, the second earl and first Marquis of Atholl, appears to have been the most fortunate of the sisters. Her wedding, which took place on May 5th, 1659, rendered her, as she wrote, "the happiest creature alive," and the happiness seems to have endured. She bore her husband three sons, the eldest of whom, John, became first Duke of

Atholl. The Marquis died in 1703. His wife was living in 1691, but the date of her death is uncertain.

While Lady Derby was busy marrying her daughters, she was sending her two youngest sons abroad. Edward, her second son, she had despatched, in 1654, to his aunt, the Duchess, enjoining on him to show her the same affection, respect and obedience as he had rendered to his mother. "He has some knowledge of mathematics, painting and surveying," she wrote. "He is gentle, and of a good disposition, brave, but without pride, a very common vice of his nation." That lack of pride or that dignified modesty has ever been one of the finest characteristics of the typical English country gentleman, and it was from his father that Edward Stanley had inherited it.

In 1657, William Stanley joined his brother in France. "Poor children," wrote their mother, "they must needs seek their fortunes abroad, since they have nothing to hope for from the land of their birth."

From her eldest son, Charles, now Lord Derby, Charlotte continued estranged. Not even his devotion to his father in his imprisonment could win his mother's forgiveness. Charles is said to have ridden from Chester to London and back in twenty-four hours, in order to petition Parliament to annul the capital sentence passed by court-martial on his father. But nothing could make Charlotte forget that her first-born had run away from home, had wedded a wife without a dowry, and had negotiated with the Parliament. "Worse than the prodigal son," she calls him. And to her daughter-in-law she was equally unjust. "There never was so malignant a nature as that woman's, who has nothing good or pleasant about her," she wrote.

Despite these hard words, however, motherly love was not utterly extinguished in Charlotte's heart; and the approach of danger fanned that spark into a flame.

In the Royalist rising which took place in Lancashire in 1659, Lord Derby, having been defeated at Nantwich, was taken prisoner. His wife joined him in prison. And then Charlotte welcomed to her home at Knowsley his nine little children, one of whom was an infant but a few weeks old. At the same time, the Countess wrote to her sister-in-law entreating her to procure the intervention of the French ambassador in England, Monsieur de Bordeaux, on her nephew's behalf. Apparently this intervention took place and succeeded; for Derby, after having been imprisoned first at Shrewsbury, and then in the Tower of London, was set at liberty.

No sooner was her son out of danger than Charlotte's bitterness against him returned. She accused him of cheating her out of a share in the revenues of the Isle of Man, which she said his father had assigned to her for twenty-one years.

As to the merits of this quarrel we cannot attempt to judge. But the vindictiveness with which the Countess pursued it is revealed in her letters. Another document shows her inconsistency: in her will, dated 1654, while "trusting in Jesus to forgive her own misdeeds," she refuses to pardon her son, and cuts him off with £5.

We must not, however, be too hard on Charlotte by demanding from her virtues not in accordance with the spirit of the age, or with her own upbringing. The austere Calvinist faith in which she had been nurtured, encouraged an unforgiving disposition. Moreover, the Countess, like the rest of us, suffered from the vices of her virtues; and it was the same stern resolution which had

enabled her to hold Lathom against the Parliamentarians, that now rendered her implacable in resentment. We may also suspect that Charlotte and her eldest son were too much alike in disposition to have ever been excellent friends. Charles Stanley had all the La Trémoille characteristics; he, unlike his brother Edward, was proud, and at the same time, impulsive, resolute and vigorous.

Meanwhile, despite the failure of the Lancashire rising, Royalist feeling was growing throughout the country, and the Republican party was daily becoming more disintegrated. Lady Derby was now filled with hope, especially when General Monk set out from Scotland on his famous march to London.

"General Monk has seized Berwick . . . where he is now negotiating some kind of treaty with Lambert," wrote Charlotte. "God in His goodness will bring out order from disorder."

And her hopes were not disappointed. Events moved rapidly. On February 11th, 1660, Monk led his troops into London. On May 7th, Lady Derby could write that Parliament had "done justice and recognised his Majesty." "It is true that this passes human wisdom," she exclaimed; "it is beyond our understanding, and can never be enough admired."

By this time the Countess's two eldest sons had taken their places in Parliament, the Earl in the House of Lords, his brother William in the Commons, but not without considerable opposition. The youngest, Edward Stanley, was abroad with the King, standing high in his Sovereign's favour. In such stirring times the Countess could no longer remain in exile at Knowsley. If only for her children's interests, she must needs come to London. It

was difficult, however, for her to afford the journey and the expense of living in the capital. But, summoning all her resources, in May she arrived in town.

As she had anticipated, after years of country life, the sight of the great world and its rejoicings filled her with mingled thoughts. But she would not permit the contemplation of her own misfortunes to cloud her joy at her Sovereign's restoration. "We may well say God hath done wonders," she wrote, "for which may His name be for ever blessed."

From the King, both for herself and her children, Lady Derby hoped much. Alas! those hopes were destined to disappointment. Had her loyalty permitted, the Countess at the close of her life might have echoed the Psalmist's cry: "Put not your trust in princes . . . in whom there is no help." Charles no doubt found it impossible to gratify all those who looked to him for the reward of past services. Yet one would have thought that the defender of Lathom, and the widow of one who had died in his cause, had a first claim upon his gratitude.

True, the King was lavish in his promises, true he was all kindness, courtesy and sympathy to the widow, visiting her unceremoniously when she was ill, and winning her heart, so that she described him as "the most charming prince in the world." Yet this Prince Charming, while rewarding others who had served him less faithfully, did nothing but dangle before Charlotte's aspiring gaze the uncertain hope that if the Queen bore him children, Lady Derby should be their governess.

For Lady Derby's sons the King did practically nothing. All that William Stanley received was a cornetcy in the Guards. The King's brother, the Duke of York, showed a truer appreciation of the services rendered

by this family to the royal cause by appointing Edward Stanley to be first and sole gentleman of his bedchamber. Meanwhile the " worse than prodigal son," possessed by his mother's vindictiveness, had fallen into disgrace by his summary execution of the traitor, William Christian, thus violating the Act of Indemnity, and laying himself open to a charge of murder. From this charge Lord Derby was fortunate in escaping with no heavier penalty than the confiscation of part of his estates and banishment from court.

These bitter disappointments, however, Charlotte in that glorious year of the Restoration did not foresee. Then in the fulness of hope she could participate in royalist rejoicing. And in an unusually cheerful spirit in this and following years, she wrote to her sister-in-law of the gay doings at court and in town, of the coronation, of the Queen-Dowager's return, of the marriage of the King and the Duke of York, also, alas !—and with no less satisfaction—of those dire deeds of revenge which sullied the King's return, of that black day, January 30th, 1661, the twelfth anniversary of Charles I.'s death, when the exhumed corpses of Cromwell, Ireton and Bradlaugh were dragged on hurdles through London streets, hanged at Tyburn gate, and buried beneath it.

Towards the end of her life, Lady Derby found it impossible to meet the expenses involved by residence in London. She was in debt ; tradesmen were beginning to dun her, and even to refuse to supply her with necessaries. Therefore, she retired to Knowsley ; and there during the severe winter of 1662–3 she fell ill. Although from that sickness she recovered, another followed ; and on March 31st, 1664, she died at the age of sixty-five.

In her will she had pathetically begged " to be buried

near her dear lord and husband in the parish church at Ormskirk in Lancashire, "if it may be without unnecessary expense." Possibly the expense was deemed unnecessary. At any rate, this testamentary request was ignored until nine years after Charlotte's death. Then, and not till then, were her remains interred in Ormskirk Church, and after her name in the parish register were inscribed the words: *post funera virtus.*

CHAPTER VII

HENRY CHARLES DE LA TRÉMOILLE, A HERO OF THE FRONDE.

1620—1672

THE heads of the La Trémoille family may be classed in two categories, those who played a prominent part in war and in national affairs, and those who lived quietly the lives of country gentlemen.

To the second category, in the last part of his life, belongs Lady Derby's eldest brother Henry, Duc de Thouars. Having served his King in many campaigns, Henry, at the age of forty-five, on the death of Louis XIII., just at the time when across the channel his sister was holding at bay the Parliamentarian army, retired from public affairs. On his estates in Poitou and Brittany he passed the remainder of his days, keeping aloof alike from the troubles of Louis XIV.'s long minority, and from the splendour of his personal rule. In the quietude of this rural existence the Duke's life was prolonged to what was then the extremely advanced age of seventy-six. Outliving his wife and eldest son, he died in 1674.

But during this long retirement, Henry by no means lost interest in public affairs. And in 1658, on the death of Oliver Cromwell, we find him writing[1] to the exiled Queen of England, Henrietta Maria, a letter permeated not only with ardent monarchism, but with that religious

[1] The letter dated October 1st, 1658, appears in the "Registre de Correspondance et Biographie du Duc Henry de La Trémoille," par Hugues Imbert (Poitiers, 1867), 53.

bitterness which too often characterises those who have changed their faith.[1] "Madame," he wrote, "my isolation from court and from society hath alone deferred the performance of my duty in giving expression to my feelings on the death of the common enemy of princes, of religion, and of your Majesty. The public and my own personal joy [at this event] is augmented and intensified by the desire and the hope to behold the King, your Son, established upon the august throne of an empire once so prosperous, but now to the horrible scandal of all Christendom, ruined by heresy, impiety and rebellion. We hoped from divine justice a chastisement which it seems pleased to reserve for another life, possibly because in this one there exists no punishment proportionate to crimes unparalleled throughout all time."

The Duke's change of religion must have caused considerable dissension in the ducal household, where the Duchess, the stern Marie de la Tour, remained true to Protestantism, and where the children, two of them,[2] although the Duke had insisted on their all being admitted with him into the Catholic Church, afterwards reverted to their mother's faith.

By Marie de la Tour, Henry had five children: Henry Charles, Prince de Tarente; Louis Maurice, Comte de Laval, who served with the Duc de Longueville in his Italian campaigns; Armand Charles and Elizabeth, who both died in childhood; and Marie Charlotte, who at Paris on July 18th, 1662, married Bernard of Saxe Weimar, son of the Duke of Saxe Weimar; she became a widow in 1678, and died of apoplexy in 1682.[3]

[1] For the Duke's abjuration of the Protestant religion, see *ante*, 132.

[2] The Prince de Tarente and his sister, Marie Charlotte.

[3] In "La Galerie des Portraits de Mdlle. de Montpensier" (see ed. Barthélemy, 50—54), Mdlle. de La Trémoille in terms by no means

HENRY DE LA TREMOILLE I^du nom Duc de Thouars, Pair de France, Prince de Tarente et de Talmond, Comte de Laual, Villefranche, Montfort, Taillebourg, Benon, Guynes et Ionuelles, Vicomte de Ren[illegible]nes, et de Bais, Baron de Vitre, Didone, Berrie, et Mauleon, Marquis d'Espinay &c. Cheualier des ordres du Roy, Fils de Claude de la Tremoille Duc de Thouars, Pair de France, et de Charlotte Brabantine de Naſſau fille de Guillaume Prince d'Orange, et de Charlotte de Bourbon Montpensier, nasquit a Thouars en 1598. Il recueillit en l'annee 1605 la succeſſion de la maison de Laual, qui par representaõn de Charlotte d'Aragon Princeſſe de Tarante sa bisayeulle, la rendu seul et Vnique heritier de Frederic d'Aragon Roy de Naples et d'Anne de Sauoye son espouse, Fille d'Amé Duc de Sauoye et d'Iolande de France; Il espouſa en 1619 Marie de la Tour D'Auuergne, fille de Henry de la Tour Duc de Buillon, Prince Souuerain de Sedan, et d'Elizabet de Naſſau.

It was to his eldest son, Charles, famous in history as the Prince de Tarente, that the Duke looked for the maintenance of the family tradition of prowess in war and activity in national affairs. And in 1656, in order to help him to maintain this position, Henry, like a latter-day King Lear, actually ceded to his son the duchy of Thouars with its title, château, lands, and all other appurtenances. Charles in his father's stead became a peer of France, and took his place in the Paris Parlement. But such fame had he won as Prince de Tarente that until the day of his death, in 1672, he was known by no other title.

For the Prince de Tarente's eventful career we are fortunate in possessing an excellent authority in the shape of his own Memoirs,[1] told in his own words for the benefit of his children.

Of this valuable little book, as far as we can ascertain, there exists only one edition, that printed at Liège in 1767. But the Duc de La Trémoille possesses two manuscripts of the work enriched with corrections and additions. It is mainly from this narrative that the following story of the Prince's life is derived.

Born at Thouars on December 17th, 1620, in his earliest years Charles was extremely delicate. He was about seven years old when his father became a Catholic ; and then the boy's education was confided to a Jesuit priest, who taught him, in addition to mathematics and drawing, to speak Latin with as great facility as his mother tongue. Later, Charles was sent to the Academy

flattering gives a description of her own character and personal appearance.

[1] "Mémoires de Henri Charles de La Trémoille, Prince de Tarente," à Liège, chez J. F. Bassompierre, Imprimeur de son Altesse et Librairie, 1767.

of one Sieur Benjamin, where he had for playmate and friend his cousin the Duc d'Enghien,[1] who, as the great Condé, was to exercise a dominant and disastrous influence over his career.

His schooldays ended, Charles returned to Thouars. There he found time hang heavily on his hands. The humdrum life of a country gentleman was not to the taste of this aspiring youth. The blood of his warrior ancestors boiled in his veins, and he longed to go forth and win his spurs in the field of war. The example of his great forbear, Louis de La Trémoille, the "Knight without Reproach," fired his ambition. And we are not surprised to find him following in Louis' footsteps and running away from home.[2] But Charles's escapade met with better success than Louis', for while the fifteenth century truant had been ignominiously caught and brought home, his descendant succeeded in reaching Dieppe and embarking on a boat which carried him to England. In after years, La Trémoille confessed to his children, that his success in getting away was largely due to his Protestant mother, who, eager to remove her son from his father's Catholic influence, had connived at his flight. But England was not the destination on which the truant had set his heart. His ambition was to trail a pike in the Low Countries, that great school of war whither his great-uncle,[3] the Stadtholder, Frederick, Henry of Nassau, by his brilliant campaigns against the Spaniards, was attracting all the gallant youth of Europe.

The tempests of the Channel and the qualms of sea-sickness, however, so cooled the Prince's ardour that by

[1] The grandson of Charlotte de La Trémoille, Princesse de Condé.
[2] See *ante*, 53.
[3] Frederick Henry was the son of William the Silent, and the brother of Charlotte Brabantine, wife of Claude de La Trémoille, who was our hero's grandmother.

the time his captain landed him at a Devonshire sea-port he had for the moment lost all taste for adventure ; and gladly did he accept his Aunt and Uncle Derby's invitation to spend two months with them in London.

During this time La Trémoille's diplomatic mother was winning her husband's pardon for their son, and obtaining his consent to Charles's design of joining his great kinsman in the Netherlands. So completely successful was her intercession, that the Duke promised Charles an allowance of 30,000 livres per annum, to which amount Marie de la Tour, from her private purse, added a considerable sum.

It was during his stay in England that the Prince rejoiced his mother's heart by resolving to return to the Reformed faith, a resolution to which he gave effect immediately on his arrival at the Hague.

In that year, 1639, the Dutch court was busy with negotiations for the marriage of the Stadtholder's son, Prince William, with the English Princess Mary, eldest daughter of Charles I. The marriage was arranged in the following year, and La Trémoille was invited to accompany the bridegroom, who was but a boy of sixteen, to his wedding in London.

But on the eve of departure Charles met with an adventure which came near to upsetting his English visit.

This youth of twenty had employed his time at the Dutch court by falling in love with his cousin, Louisa Henrietta, the Stadtholder's daughter. And when the royal party found itself hindered from starting and windbound in Brill harbour, our young adventurer profited by the delay to slip back to the Hague and bid his dear cousin one more farewell. Then on the morrow, fearing lest the Prince might have set forth without him,

he returned with all possible speed to the coast, and, in a little boat, with one sailor and an officer of his suite, set out for Brill. Five miles from land, however, as ill luck would have it, they were caught in a squall. The seaman promptly lost his head, while the landsmen fell a-praying. From these pious exercises they were speedily diverted by the mariner joining them. This La Trémoille could not endure. It was all very well for landlubbers to pray, but from a sailor his passengers expected more active measures. So, in the most violent Flemish he could command, Charles rounded on the praying sailor, explaining to him forcibly, that faith without works is dead. The works which followed this adjuration, however, bid fair to be the death of these seafarers : for with La Trémoille at the helm and the boatman obeying his orders by sailing in the teeth of the storm, things went from bad to worse : first their mast was shattered, then they themselves were plunged up to their necks in water, and finally the barque capsized. Afraid lest the land was too far away for them to swim to, they clung to their overturned craft, and just managed to keep afloat until the tempest abated and their boat righted herself. Eventually, after a voyage of three hours, which ought not to have lasted more than forty-five minutes, they reached Brill in time to join the Prince and his escort.

Overtaken by no further adventure and escorted by the Dutch fleet, the royal party crossed the sea and sailed up the Thames to Gravesend.

Here they were met by the Ambassadors from the Low Countries, and by royal coaches which conveyed them to Whitehall, where Prince William, and—we may presume —La Trémoille with him, was presented to their Majesties. Thence, after visiting the Princes and Princesses at

Somerset House, they proceeded to their own quarters near by, in that curious assemblage of detached buildings known as Arundel House. Despite its lack of architectural beauty, Arundel House, filled as it was with priceless works of art, had for years been deemed a worthy residence for distinguished foreign visitors to London. Sully had stayed there when he was French Ambassador in the reign of James I.

At this point La Trémoille's Memoirs are disappointing. Of the royal wedding there was little to tell, for it was celebrated quietly on May 2nd, 1641, on the very day when King Charles was making one of his attempts to gain military control over the Tower of London ; and we may pardon our author if of the unceremonious espousal at Whitehall of the little girl of ten by the boy of sixteen he has not a word to say. But of the impression made upon the young foreigner's mind by the condition of England at that time, of an England on the eve of civil war, of an England in which the Archbishop of Canterbury lay impeached on a charge of high treason in the Tower, and in which the King's first minister was but a few days later to lose his head, we might have expected to have been given some idea. At that time such subjects, however, did not interest our Memoirist. War and women were the matters of most moment to him then, and war for him, as for many another in that day, too often meant mere revenge for private wrongs.

So during his English visit he was completely absorbed with what he proudly describes as his " first affair of honour since he came into the world." It arose out of a dispute with Count Henry of Nassau, who wished to occupy a dressing-room which had been assigned to La Trémoille. This wonderful duel, much to the would-be

warrior's chagrin, never took place, for the young Prince of Orange bound him over to keep the peace while in England, and on his return to Holland the Stadtholder forbade him to fight.

From personal affairs of honour La Trémoille was soon diverted by the wider operations of the Thirty Years' War. In the summer of 1641, Frederick Henry appointed him colonel of a cavalry regiment ; and in this capacity La Trémoille, so he tells us, distinguished himself for vigour and valour, remaining four consecutive nights on horseback to avoid a surprise by the enemy. But this excess of youthful ardour resulted in an illness which before the close of the campaign compelled the young colonel to withdraw from action.

By the next year he was well enough to take the field again. And now " the vivacity of his youth," as he calls it, involved him in a second affair of honour, which proved more serious than the first. Encamped before Rhimbergue, he fought a duel with Prince Radzivill,[1] one of Elizabeth Stuart's numerous admirers. His antagonist wounded him so severely in the right arm, four inches above the wrist, that the limb was nearly severed.[2]

" Straightway," writes Tarente, " my sword flew out of my hand. I fell, and Prince Radzivill's people raised me and tied up my arm in order to stop the flow of blood, for I was bleeding profusely. A messenger hastened to Rhimbergue for a surgeon, and came back with one called Le Sage, who saved my life by his diligence. In order to stanch the blood he was obliged to bind several veins (*sic*) and arteries, which operation gave me intense pain. I was carried to Rhimbergue ; and there Le Sage, having

[1] There were several princes of that name who distinguished themselves in this century. This was probably Janussius II., Grand Chamberlain of Lithuania. See Morèri's Dictionary, under Radzivill

[2] " Mémoires," 19.

permitted me to rest for an hour, effected other ligatures, which caused me even worse pain than the first. Yet, notwithstanding all that I had suffered, the following night I slept soundly, and three weeks later a party of 2,000 horse having approached our quarters, I mounted and charged them."

But an injury such as La Trémoille describes could not be cured in three weeks, and a year later the wound was still troubling him. Then, when the campaign of 1643 was over, he returned to France to take the waters of Barège in order to strengthen his arm ; and, after having greatly benefited from a month's treatment, he visited his parents at Thouars. There the subject of his marriage was mooted. The bride whom the Duke and Duchess had chosen for their eldest son was a great heiress, Mdlle. de Rohan, who, on account of her vast wealth, was one of the greatest matches in Europe. Already she had refused several distinguished suitors, among them La Trémoille's kinsman, Prince Rupert. But Mdlle. de Rohan's wealth had no attraction for La Trémoille, who was still deeply in love with his cousin Henrietta ; and during his stay at Thouars he persuaded his parents to do what they could in that quarter to further his suit.

Returning to Holland, Tarente was in time to engage in the campaign of 1644, in which he had an extraordinary adventure. The plague was then devastating the Low Countries. After a long night march, La Trémoille with his regiment entered a village, where, worn out with fatigue, he went into one of the first houses he came to. There, without undressing, he threw himself on a bed and slept soundly. Suddenly he was awakened by the noise of trumpets ; and, on opening his eyes, saw standing by his bedside the village priest, who

told him that the plague was rife in that village, and that he was in an infected house; he believed, moreover, added the priest, that the house contained the bodies of its master and mistress, who, having died of the plague, were about to be interred when the army entered the village. "If we look we shall find them," said the priest. And he was not mistaken. The bed on which La Trémoille had been calmly reposing for an hour was unmade, and there beneath the mattress were the two corpses.[1]

By a marvellous stroke of luck La Trémoille escaped infection and returned to the Hague, where he continued to pay his addresses to his cousin. Many pages of the Memoirs are devoted to this love story. The lady herself apparently returned La Trémoille's affection; the Stadtholder favoured his suit; but in the Stadtholder's wife, the Princess of Orange, Emilie of Solms, he had a formidable adversary. She had first determined to marry her eldest daughter to the Prince of Wales; but as the royal fortunes in England darkened, she selected as her son-in-law Frederick William, Elector of Brandenbourg, who was later to be known as the Great Elector. True to her cousin, however, Henrietta was obdurate, and, when the wedding day arrived, the bride had to be conducted to the church by force. In other respects, too, the bridal was a sad one, for Henrietta's illustrious father, Frederick Henry, was lying at the point of death, attacked by a mental malady.

Shortly afterwards the family was summoned to his death-bed; and Tarente tells us that he could not restrain his tears when he saw this famous captain, "who for so many years had gloriously commanded the armies of the United Provinces, and ruled the Republic with such

[1] "Mémoires," 28.

great wisdom and authority, stretched upon his bed with less understanding than an infant." Frederick Henry had indeed been one of the most striking figures of the age ; by his military and political talents, by his wisdom and his diplomacy, he had brought his country to the height of prosperity. It must have been inexpressibly sad to see such a ruler laid low and deprived of intellect. A few days later, in March, 1647, William the Silent's great son passed away. " His death," writes La Trémoille, " deprived me of all desire to establish myself in Holland." So, bidding farewell to his former love, whom he counselled to do her best to forget him, and to live happily with her husband, the Prince de Tarente returned to Thouars.

Soon after his arrival negotiations for his marriage with a member of the distinguished German house of Hesse Cassel were opened, and in a few months carried through. In September, 1647, the La Trémoille emissary, one Dumontal by name, was despatched to Cassel for the drawing up of the marriage contract ; and in the following May, " with more ceremony than he liked," in the Protestant church of Cassel, the Prince de Tarente was united to the very noble and illustrious Princess, Madame Emilie, Princess Landgrave of Hesse.

The new Princesse de Tarente, who was later to become the friend of Madame de Sévigné, and to figure in her letters as *la bonne Tarente*, was the daughter of the late Landgraf of Hesse Cassel, Wilhelm V. Her mother, one of the strongest-minded women of the age, was Countess of Hanau Muntzenberg,[1] and lady of other extensive

[1] Her husband died in 1637, leaving his estates heavily burdened with debt, which his widow during her son's long minority succeeded in paying off. She was also able to raise and to maintain on the side of France in the Thirty Years' War a force of 6,000 foot and 4,000 horse.

domains, the guttural names[1] of which, grating on the ears of Madame de Sévigné, were to suffer cruel distortion and merry mockery from the pen of that brilliant letter-writer.

In his own marriage, the Prince de Tarente did not succeed in practising the wise counsel he had given to his former love: he and his wife, if we may believe the Memoirs[2] of their daughter, Charlotte Amélie, Countess of Altenburg, did not live happily together. In his own Memoirs the Prince very seldom mentions his wife.

After the Treaty of Westphalia had made peace between the United Provinces and Spain, Holland ceased to afford La Trémoille a field for his warlike activities. He discovered one, however, in France, where the war which continued with Spain was soon to be complicated by the internal struggles of the Fronde.[3]

With the wisdom of after years, the Prince looked back regretfully on this period of his life. "Those events," he wrote, referring to the Fronde, "did more than anything else to injure my own fortunes, and those of my house." And, indeed, never in French history was there such a medley of inconsequence and folly as that into which La Trémoille, by the influence of his cousin, the Prince de Condé, was now being drawn.

The objects of the *Frondeurs* were purely personal. Hatred of Cardinal Mazarin, the young King's chief

Meanwhile her court became a school of manners, whither princes flocked to learn the fine art of commanding others and of commanding themselves. See Morèri's Dictionary, under Hesse Cassel, Amélie Elizabeth.

[1] Catzenelmbogen, Dietz, Ziegenhaim, Nidda.

[2] Of these interesting "Memoirs," the original MS. in French is in the Grand Ducal Library at Oldenburg; translated into German, it has been published with an introduction, notes and commentary by Dr. Reinhard Mosen (Oldenburg, Leipzig, 1892). Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond is preparing an English version.

[3] So called from the slings or *Frondes* used by Parisian street arabs in their gutter-play. This civil war broke out in 1648.

minister, inspired them all. In La Trémoille's case it was his desire to oust the Rohans from the presidency over the provincial parliament, the estates of Brittany, that induced him to throw in his lot with the rebellious nobles. Mazarin had favoured the Rohans. The Prince de Condé, Tarente's cousin, and the leader of the Fronde, promised to espouse his kinsman's cause if he would intervene actively on his side in the civil war.

Thus was La Trémoille drawn into that vortex of romance, lawlessness and *bizarrerie* which for some years threatened to shipwreck the fortunes of France. On October 1st, 1651, we find him accepting Condé's commission to raise a regiment of thirty companies in Poitou.

Among all the confusion of the Fronde, one circumstance stands out distinctly; the whole movement was dominated by women, by a group of Amazons, who were at once its instruments and its motive power, chiefly by two duchesses and two princesses, Chevreuse and Longueville, the Palatine,[1] and the Great Mademoiselle. This brilliant, beautiful and fascinating quartette, mingling their political intrigues with those of love, played with the honour and the lives of men, and two of them, Chevreuse and the Palatine, did not scruple to disport themselves on the highways in masculine attire.

Of the Palatine it was said that not even Elizabeth of England had more capacity for governing a state. Madame de Longueville's[2] gifts were her blonde hair and charming eyes. But by far the most influential and the most *bizarre* of the *Frondeuses* was the Great Mademoiselle, Anne de Montpensier, daughter of Gaston,

[1] Anne de Gonzague, second daughter of Charles de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers, and of Catherine of Lorraine.

[2] Born in a prison, she died in a convent. She was sister to the Great Condé, and cousin, therefore, to the Prince de Tarente.

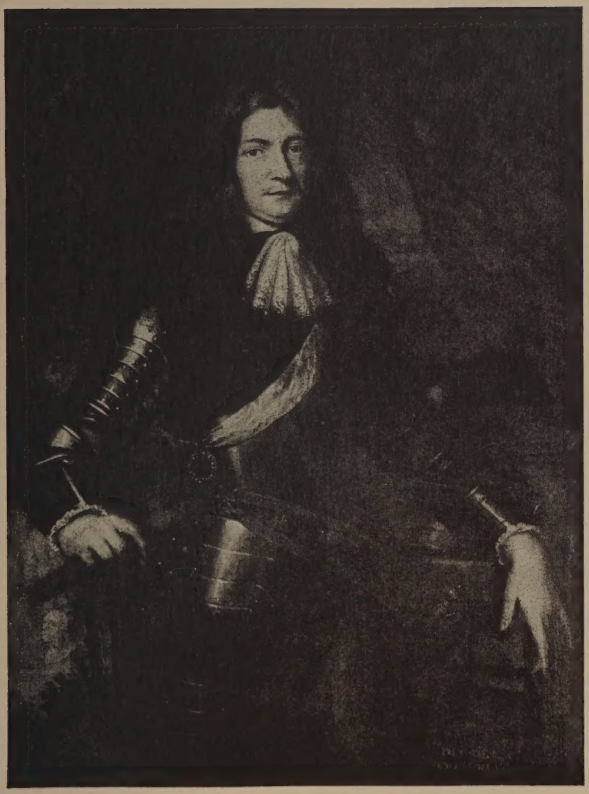
Duke of Orléans, and grand-daughter of King Henry IV.

With the Great Mademoiselle's two most striking achievements during the Fronde, the capture of Orléans and the battle of the Porte St. Antoine, the Prince de Tarente was more or less connected.

After the Princess's ludicrous entry into Orléans, which, as related in her own Memoirs, reads like an absurd travesty of Jeanne d'Arc's entering the city, la Grande Mademoiselle amused herself by receiving presents of bonbons from the city council and by seizing and perusing the various despatches which passed through the town. When these chanced to contain love stories, or to reveal family secrets, the conqueress of Orléans was mightily diverted. One of these captured despatches, which to the Princess was very uninteresting, to Tarente was highly important; and to him Mademoiselle had the good sense to send it. The possession of this letter enabled the Prince to save his château of Taillebourg from being razed to the ground by one of Mazarin's generals. But, balked of their prey in one direction, the Prince's enemies turned in their wrath against the most lordly of all the La Trémoille castles and threatened to besiege Thouars, where Duke Henry and his Duchess were then residing.

It was to obtain a force for the protection of his own dominions that in March, 1652, Tarente, having resigned the command which for some months he had been exercising in Guyenne and Saintonge, went to Paris and there witnessed the Great Mademoiselle's second exploit.

The Prince found Paris in a state of the utmost disorder. In the absence of Mazarin and the court, the feeble, vacillating Duke of Orléans, Mademoiselle's father, who



HENRY CHARLES DE LA TRÉMOILLE, PRINCE DE TARENTE

From a photograph by Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond of a picture belonging to Mr. Aldenburg Bentinck at Indio.

should have been at the head of affairs, was proving himself totally incompetent. Waves of riot and robbery surged up to the very gates of his palace, the Luxembourg. Only a few yards away, in the Rue de Tournon, a President of the Parlement was nearly murdered. The most brilliant figure of the day, Cardinal de Retz, in his Memoirs tells how he went in hourly fear of death by assassination.

The horror of this state of things appears to have impressed La Trémoille, for, when Condé came to Paris in April, we find the Prince vainly endeavouring to persuade his kinsman to make peace.

In May, Mademoiselle left Orléans, and entered Paris, where she took up her abode in the Tuileries. On the way she had been besieged in Etampes by Mazarin's army under Turenne.

Coming away from the Protestant sermon at Charenton one Sunday morning, La Trémoille heard of the raising of the siege of Etampes and the march of Turenne towards Paris. Hastening to the Hôtel de Condé,[1] near the Luxembourg, the Prince de Tarente was in time to assist at a council of war, which resulted in the raising of a citizen army. With this force Condé, and La Trémoille with him, marched out to St. Cloud, while Turenne took up his position a little further north, on the opposite bank of the Seine, at St. Denis. A good deal of skirmishing took place between the two forces. And La Trémoille relates how, during a night attack on the village of St. Denis, he and his men crossed the moat up to their necks in water, and drove the Swiss guards, who were holding the village for Turenne, to take refuge in the Abbey. But two days later the King's troops recaptured St. Denis,

[1] The present Rue de Condé takes its name from the old hotel, of which nothing remains.

and Condé soon began to find his position at St. Cloud untenable.

He then resolved to transfer his army to Charenton; and, in order to avoid making a long *détour*, he asked the municipality of Paris to allow his force to pass through the city. This permission, however, was refused. And thus it came about that on the night of July 1st, as Mademoiselle was leaning out of her window in the Tuileries, she heard the sound of drums and trumpets, and saw in the distance a whole army beginning to defile past on the other side of the ramparts.[1]

Close on Condé's rear Turenne's army was pressing; and at dawn in the Faubourg St. Antoine a battle engaged, in which the *Frondeurs*, with their backs to the St. Antoine gate, soon began to have the worst of it. Then it was that Condé despatched in all haste a message to the Luxembourg, imploring the Duke of Orléans for aid. But Gaston, as was his wont in every crisis, pleaded illness and refused to see the messenger, who speedily went to the Tuileries and knocked up Mademoiselle. It was six o'clock in the morning. The heroine of Orléans had passed but four hours in bed, for until two o'clock she had been at her window watching the troops on the march. In a trice, however, she was up and away to the Luxembourg, weeping and storming at her phlegmatic father, until, merely to get rid of her, he bade her be gone to the Hôtel de Ville to command the municipality to open its gates to Condé and his army. Then, tearing through the streets, forcing her way through the mob which thronged the Place de Grève into the presence of the Provost of the Merchants, the aldermen and the governor of Paris, assembled in

[1] "Mémoires de Mdlle. de Montpensier," ed. Mich. et Poujoulat, Sér. II., Vol. IV., 118.

the Hôtel de Ville, she read them a letter from her father, asking them to excuse his absence through illness and to listen to his wishes as expressed by his daughter. These wishes were that the municipality should not only send an armed force to Condé's aid, but that they should reverse their previous decision and permit his army to pass through the city. It was hard for these civic dignitaries thus to eat their own words, and not until they had deliberated long and caused Mademoiselle to suffer an agony of suspense, did they agree to obey the Duke's orders.

Meanwhile, Condé, with whom Mademoiselle imagined herself ardently in love, was in danger of defeat and death at the city gate. Of the events which there transpired, La Trémoille in his Memoirs gives a vivid account, which for the most part may be related in his own words.

" Two harmless wounds I received in this action," he writes, " one in the belt of my cuirasse, the other in my helmet. In the place of the Duc de Nemours, who had been wounded in the hand I offered the Prince [Condé] to command the vanguard, a proposal he received gladly. But, as I was advancing at his side, my horse fell, killed by a canon ball. Whereupon the Prince, thinking that I too had been struck, cried aloud, ' Alas ! unhappy that I am to have lost the last of my friends.' But I from beneath my horse called out that I was unharmed and suffering only from the bruises inflicted by my own armour during my fall. Straightway a soldier brought me another horse, which I mounted."

Meanwhile, continues La Trémoille, Mademoiselle, " with a courage worthy of her birth, and far superior to that of her sex, had come to the Porte St. Antoine, where she persuaded the people that we were fighting for their liberty and for the banishment of a Minister who oppressed

them. All she could do, however, was to induce them to open the gates so as to let pass the baggage of our army ; and meanwhile she wrote a note to the Prince, entreating him to save his life by coming in with the baggage. This he refused to do. Later, owing to Mademoiselle's persuasions, a Parisian force came out to join us. And at length the citizens listened to her entreaties, and opened the gates to all of us while the canon of the Bastille were fired on Turenne's army."

La Trémoille's account of these proceedings differs in one or two details from that given by Mademoiselle in her Memoirs. For example, the former would indicate that, after winning the consent of the city council to open the gate, Mademoiselle had some difficulty in persuading the citizens to carry out the council's command. Mademoiselle herself does not mention this. But, however it may have been, Paris was now enthusiastically *Frondeur*. Condé and Mademoiselle were the heroes of the hour. La Trémoille shared their triumph. With his cousin, Tarente went to the Luxembourg, where Gaston d'Orléans received him, " doing me the honour," he writes, " to say that I had caused him more anxiety than anyone."

During the weeks that followed, Paris was in an uproar. Its fickle citizens vacillated from side to side, while the leaders of both parties were negotiating or playing at negotiations, as was their custom throughout the Fronde. And meanwhile Mazarin was trying to use La Trémoille's known discontent with his position in Condé's army to detach him from his cousin. But the Cardinal did not succeed ; Tarente's affection for the Prince won the day ; and when the latter fell ill[1] in September, it was La

[1] Condé was suffering from the stone, a malady he had inherited from his father.

Trémoille who commanded his troops in the constant skirmishings with the royal forces outside the city gates.

The Parisians soon grew tired of feeding Condé's army, and, victuals having been refused, the leader of the Fronde, on October 14th, was compelled to quit the capital.[1] With him went La Trémoille. They directed their march to Champagne, where, as the result of a series of brilliant military operations, Condé captured several towns. He was unable to hold them, however, for any length of time ; and, finding it impossible to take any firm foothold in this province, he made his way to the northern frontier. There La Trémoille remained with him while he was recovering from another illness in his great forest-girt fortress of Stenay, through the winter of 1652–3. And it was then that the Prince de Tarente followed his leader, who had been appointed general of the Spanish forces, and openly joined the enemy of his country.

In the summer of this year the Prince left his cousin for a while in order to go to Holland and raise money. Returning to the French frontier, La Trémoille found Condé again stricken with illness, while his troops were about to attack the town of Rocroy. Then Tarente, so he tells us, took the command, and after a siege of twenty-two days, captured the town.[2]

But Condé's army, writes the Prince, was in a terrible plight, two-thirds of the cavalry unmounted, and the rest of the soldiers wretchedly accoutred. Willingly would La Trémoille have equipped them at his own expense, had he been able. But his fortune was spent and his credit exhausted, as well as that of his friends. Indeed, for

[1] Cardinal de Retz, "Mémoires," ed. Mich. et Poujoulat, Ser. III., Vol. I., 396—400.

[2] The great History of the Princes of Condé, by the Duc d'Aumale, Vol. VI., Chap. 5, while stating that Condé was ill at this time, makes no mention of La Trémoille's command.

generations the La Trémoille treasury was to suffer from deplenishment through the Prince de Tarente's lavish expenditure during this civil war.

Hopeless of achieving anything with so miserable a force, the Prince threw up his command and returned to Holland.

At Spa in the previous summer he had met the exiled Charles II. of England, who, having been turned out of France, where his presence impeded Mazarin's negotiations with Cromwell, had come to drink the waters with his sister Mary, the Dowager Princess of Orange. While residing in France, Charles had played a prominent part in the interminable negotiations between *Frondeurs* and Royalists ; and there doubtless he had met La Trémoille, whose importance and capacity must have made a great impression on the King. For Charles now conferred on him one of the highest honours left to the banished monarch to bestow, he invested him with the Order of the Garter. But in return for this favour, Charles asked the Prince to do him a service, which La Trémoille found it impossible to perform, viz. : to effect a reconciliation between the Princess of Orange and her mother-in-law, that quarrelsome Emilie de Solms, who had never forgiven Tarente for aspiring to the hand of her daughter.

Once having cut himself adrift from his country, La Trémoille grew extremely eclectic in his foreign relations. Having drawn sword for the Catholic King, and accepted high honour from Charles, the Prince now negotiated with the champion of Protestantism and Charles's mortal enemy, Oliver Cromwell. While still at Spa, La Trémoille received an emissary from the Protector, who asked him to lead a movement of the French Protestant churches against the French crown. But the Prince's Protestantism

was purely political, and in so rash an enterprise he refused to involve himself unless the Protector would undertake to appear in Languedoc. This was impossible; and so the negotiations, during which La Trémoille had been careful not to commit himself in writing, fell through.

In the winter of 1654—5 the Prince was at the Hague, where his hospitable reception encouraged him to send for his wife, the Princess Emilie, and his sister, Marie Charlotte. And it was at the Hague, in May, 1655, that his eldest son, Charles, was born. He already had a daughter, Charlotte Emilie.[1]

Despite his father's poverty, the baptism of the infant Prince on July 18th was a magnificent and gorgeous ceremony, which is described in detail in a document of the La Trémoille archives.[2] For sponsors the babe had the Estates of the United Provinces, represented by the deputies of Guelders, Holland, Zealand, and Utrecht; the King of Sweden, Charles Gustavus,[3] represented by Baron Spar; and his aunt, Mademoiselle de La Trémoille.

Amidst a huge concourse of people assembled from all the neighbouring towns, preceded by a body of troops and followed by all that was most distinguished at the Dutch court, this tiny scrap of humanity, smothered in jewels and cloth of silver, lying on a cushion of the same, from which depended an interminable train borne by two noble damsels, was carried by his aunt, Marie Charlotte, to the Protestant Temple at the Hague.

There he received the names of Charles, after his royal godfather, of Hollande, after one of his mother's kinsmen, and of Belgique, after the Estates. A luxurious banquet

[1] Known also as "Amélie."
[2] "Les La Trémoilles pendant cinq Siècles," IV., 203—206.
[3] Cousin and successor of the famous Christina, who had abdicated in the previous year.

followed the christening. From seven o'clock in the evening until four in the morning the illustrious guests were entertained, their ears diverted " by the flourishing of trumpets, the sound of timbrels, and the harmony of viols, and their palates flattered by the delicacy and diversity of the viands set before them." A few days later the Estates bestowed upon their godson a pension for life of 1,000 golden florins, to begin on July 18th in the following year.

Throughout 1655, high pomps and pageants were the order of the day at the Dutch court. In one of her lively letters to her nephew Charles II., Elizabeth of Bohemia tells of a court ball at which the King's sister, the Princess of Orange, appeared as an Amazon, and the Princesse de Tarente as a shepherdess. For the Princesse de Tarente such pastimes might be all very well, but such a life of mere court gaiety irked her husband's martial soul. Now that the war was over, Holland was no place for him. His active mind longed for battles and sieges, or, failing them, for a political career. And so, towards the end of this year, we find him soliciting from the French court pardon for his treason and permission to return to the land of his birth. Both these requests Mazarin, now completely reinstated in power, granted with apparent magnanimity. But the wily Cardinal had his own ends to serve. La Trémoille, however, was quick to discern them. He was not to be hoodwinked by " the suave, affable and insinuating air " with which Mazarin greeted him on his arrival in Paris. The Prince realised immediately that this arch schemer wanted to use him as mediator with the still implacable Condé ; and La Trémoille, much to the disappointment of his relatives, refused thus to be made a tool of. In a very irreconcilable

mood, therefore, he left Paris to go down and visit his parents at Thouars.

It was there and then that Duke Henry resigned the dukedom of Thouars into his son's hands.[1] And the Prince went back to Paris to take his seat in the Parlement.

Mazarin had already begun to take his revenge for La Trémoille's obduracy by inciting the young Louis XIV. to find fault with the Prince for having without his sovereign's permission accepted an Order from a foreign king. But by some means or other Louis had been won over to La Trémoille's side, and on the previous 1st of November the Prince de Tarente had received his King's permission to wear the Garter. All the while, however, Mazarin continued to plot against him. And the Prince's attempt to rouse the peasants of Poitou to resist the imposition of the salt tax did not render the Minister more friendly.

In the spring of 1656 the court was at Compiègne; and thither La Trémoille was summoned to join it. The Cardinal was amiability itself. He engaged the Prince in long conversations, which always terminated with an entreaty that he would renounce Condé and all his works. Then, finding the Prince hopelessly obdurate, Mazarin changed his tactics; La Trémoille suddenly found himself arrested, hurried into a coach with an officer and two guards, and whirled away to the citadel of Amiens.

"I have heard with great sorrow of your son's imprisonment. I have since learnt . . . that his life is not in danger, for which I bless God. . . . I do not doubt that,

[1] The document of abdication is dated January 20th, 1656 ("Les La Trémoilles pendant cinq Siècles," IV., 177).

with God's help for which I pray, he will soon recover his liberty." Thus wrote Lady Derby to her sister-in-law.[1] And we may be certain that the energetic Marie de La Tour left not a stone unturned in her efforts to obtain her son's liberty.

Fortunately, on his way to prison, La Trémoille had fallen in with a knight of his mother's suite, by whom he had been able to send a message, not only to the Duchess, Marie, but to the Elector of Brandenbourg, husband of his former love, to the King of Sweden, his son's godfather, to the Landgraf of Hesse Cassel, his brother-in-law, and to his good friends, the States General of the United Provinces, all of whom he implored to intervene on his behalf. Through their influence probably, and through the kindness of the governor, he was leniently treated in prison, permitted to walk on the ramparts of the fortress, to converse with the townsfolk, and to communicate with his friends. His mother also was allowed to visit him and to discuss with him plans for his liberation. She had doubtless already interceded with Mazarin, and now she came to implore her son as the price of his freedom to give an undertaking, should the Cardinal require it, that he would leave the country. This La Trémoille promised to do. Meanwhile, in case his relatives' intercession should fail, he was laying plans for his escape : a faithful friend had smuggled into his prison ropes and an anchor, with which to attach them to the wall ; another friend was sounding the moat, and yet another had horses in readiness.

All these contrivances, however, proved unnecessary ; for Mazarin agreed to the Duchess's conditions and released her son, permitting him to come to Paris to

[1] See Madame de Witt, "The Lady of Lathom," 221.

arrange his affairs before starting for abroad. At the Porte St. Antoine, La Trémoille's mother awaited him, and while he was in Paris busied herself with further negotiations on his behalf, which resulted in a permission to go down to Brittany and spend six weeks with his father. During this time other friends were working for him, notably his kinsman, the Duc de Noirmoustiers, and with such success that the decree of banishment from France was commuted into banishment from Paris.

But for three years longer, until the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, the Prince was far from being a free man. Mazarin controlled his movements, forbidding him to visit discontented Poitou, banishing him from his Breton estates, and finally commanding him to reside either at Troyes or at Auxerre. There is reason to believe, also, that all this while La Trémoille was intriguing with Condé and fanning discontent with Mazarin's government. Finally, however, the Treaty of the Pyrenees ended civil as well as foreign war. Condé submitted, and the King and Queen received La Trémoille at Toulouse. "The King told me he had forgotten everything," wrote Tarente, "and that in the future he would give me proofs of his affection." Condé was now free to return to France; and after some years' separation there was an affectionate meeting of the cousins at Dijon, where La Trémoille promised to do his best to restore Condé to the Cardinal's good graces.

It was not, however, until after Mazarin's death in 1661 that Condé and Tarente were completely reinstated in all honour and greatness at court. Then at length Louis XIV. granted to La Trémoille that dignity so long solicited by his house of presiding over the Assembly of

the Breton Estates. And the Prince's conduct of the session rendered him highly popular with the King, for at La Trémoille's suggestion a sum of no less than 400,000 livres, afterwards doubled, was granted to the Crown.

In the following year, on July 20th, 1662, La Trémoille married his sister Marie Charlotte to Bernard of Saxony, Duke of Jena, fourth son of the Duke of Saxe Weimar. And on this occasion Tarente obtained from Louis XIV. the official recognition of the title of Prince and Princess for all the members of his house, titles which they had assumed since the end of the fifteenth century, but were apparently only now officially permitted to bear.

Then it was that La Trémoille ladies first began to enjoy that honour so greedily coveted by all high-born French dames and damsels of remaining seated on a *tabouret* or armless chair in the presence of their Sovereign. Charlotte Amélie tells[1] how to her great chagrin, on her promotion to the *tabouret* at the age of ten, her La Trémoille pride and person suffered a humiliating fall. The Princess being very small and the *tabouret* very high, she had to be lifted on to it by an Abbé of the Queen's household. But he placed her too far forward on the stool, and she, trying to seat herself more comfortably, fell off, amidst the loud laughter of the assembled court. Other privileges only granted to foreign princes were now accorded to the La Trémoilles. For as Princes of Taranto they now asserted their right to the Neapolitan crown, which they claimed to have inherited from their ancestress Anne de Laval, grand-daughter of Frederick of Arragon, King of Naples, who in 1521 married François

[1] Memoirs, 19. See *ante*, 184, n. 2.

de La Trémoille.[1] This right, maintained for over a hundred years, and discussed lengthily during the negotiations which preceded the Treaties of Westphalia, Nymwegen, Ryswick and Utrecht, was asserted for the last time in 1748.

After Marie Charlotte's wedding the Prince and Princesse de Tarente accompanied the bride and bridegroom to Germany. Then, leaving his wife at Hesse Cassel, the Prince went to Holland. So warm a welcome did he receive from his old friends at the Hague that a visit of three weeks was prolonged into a residence of three years, during which La Trémoille engaged in a war between the United Provinces and the Bishop of Munster, and received the governorship of the fortress of Bois-le-Duc.

His mother's death in 1665 brought him back to France. Marie de La Tour's striking personality had impressed itself strongly on the inhabitants of Thouars, where she died and was buried. In a history of the town,[2] we read that for many a year the inhabitants had trembled before the terrible duchess, not because she was unjust,

[1] Frederick of Arragon, King of Naples, who ascended the throne in 1496.
|
Charlotte *m.* le Comte de Laval.
|
Anne de Laval *m.* (1511) François de la Trémoille.
|
Louis de La Trémoille, 1st Duc de Thouars.
|
Claude, Duc de Thouars.
|
Henri, Duc de Thouars.
|
Charles Henry, Prince de Tarente.

See Introduction to "Mémoires de Charles de La Trémoille, Prince de Tarente," and "Les La Trémoilles pendant cinq Siècles," V., 202, 203.

[2] Berthre de Bournisseaux, "Histoire de la Ville de Thouars depuis l'An 759 jusqu'en 1815 . . ." (Niort, 1824).

but because they knew that to the uttermost farthing, with unbending severity, she would always extort from her husband's vassals the payment of every feudal due, alike in labour, in coin, and in kind. At the time when Thouars Castle was in building, the artisans and labourers were so oppressed by her exactions that for long afterwards they cursed her name and her memory. Generations later, at the time of the Revolution, when the mob broke into the château, hers was the only portrait which was desecrated. While the picture of the tyrannical Marie was covered with filth, those of her kinsfolk, many of them, were carried off by the townspeople to be hung in their houses as objects of veneration. Owing to her Protestant faith, which she had held firmly to the end, Marie's Catholic husband would not allow her to be buried with the other La Trémoilles in the consecrated Catholic church of Notre Dame. At the southern corner, therefore, of the main wing of the château a vault was prepared, and there the remains of Marie de La Tour d'Auvergne rest in peace, having escaped the fury of the Revolutionaries, who, leaving this Protestant grave unharmed, spent their wrath on the desecration of the tombs in the neighbouring chapel. Now and again, however, the ravages of time have threatened to accomplish that which revolutionary anger spared ; the eastern wall of the vault has more than once needed reparation, and when cracks appear in it the Thouarese say that it is because Marie de La Tour wants fresh air.

After his mother's death, the Prince de Tarente with his wife and three children left Holland to take up his residence at Thouars with the old Duke Henry, who was now bedridden with gout. And there, occupied in administering his estates, and in occasionally presiding

Marie de la Tour d'Auuergne
Duchesse de la Tremoille Et de Touars. &c.

A Paris chez Pierre Mariette, rue S. Iacques a l'Esperance

over the meetings of Breton deputies, Charles de La Trémoille passed the last seven years of his life. The differences which had always divided the Prince and Princess were increased when, in 1670, Tarente reverted to his father's faith, and was admitted by the Bishop of Angers into the Catholic Church.

Madame de Tarente remained the staunchest of Protestants, and took her husband's change of religion in the most tragic manner. Her example was followed by her daughter Charlotte Amélie, who relates in her Memoirs how by her father's apostasy the household at Thouars became divided against itself. Nothing indicates more clearly the bitterness of religious strife in those days than the story of how the Prince's eldest son was separated from his mother and sister, and conveyed away to Angers, where six weeks' virtual imprisonment and the society of monks and priests reduced him to embracing his father's religion.

Fearing that her daughter too would be forced into the Catholic Church, Madame de Tarente obtained from her kinswoman, the Queen of Denmark, an invitation for Charlotte Amélie to become lady-in-waiting at the Danish court. Then, its acceptance having been forbidden by the Prince de Tarente, who was devotedly attached to his daughter, the Princess surreptitiously obtained a passport from Louis XIV., and during her husband's absence at Paris set forth for Denmark.

Meanwhile the King chanced to remark casually to Tarente that he heard his daughter was going to Denmark. "No," replied the Prince, "I have refused my consent." "But I," said Louis, "have signed her passport." Forthwith, Tarente left the court and started for Thouars, hoping to be in time to prevent his

daughter's departure. At Blois he fell in with the travellers. There was a terrible scene between husband and wife, at which Charlotte Amélie was present. But Madame de Tarente won the day and carried off her daughter to Denmark.

In high dudgeon the ladies parted from the Prince, whom they were never to see again, for, before the travellers arrived at Copenhagen, news reached them of La Trémoille's sudden death at Thouars on September 14th, 1672.

Four of the Prince de Tarente's children survived him : two daughters, Charlotte Amélie the eldest, whose adventures at the Danish court are related in the next chapter ; Marie Sylvie Brabantine, who, born in 1666, died at Paris in 1693, apparently unmarried ; a third daughter, Henriette, born in 1662, died in 1665 ; and two sons, Charles Belgique Hollande, who succeeded his father as Duc de La Trémoille, and Frédéric Guillaume, who, having entered the Church and become Abbé de Sainte Croix, later exchanged the ecclesiastical state for the army.[1]

[1] See *post*, 260, and n., also Anselme, "Histoire Généalogique," IV., 173. Bournisseaux, "Histoire de la Ville de Thouars," 202, says he remained in the Church, becoming Cardinal and Archbishop of Cambrai.

CHAPTER VIII[1]

LA BONNE TARENTE AND HER DAUGHTER, AS THEY APPEAR IN THE LETTERS OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

OUR friends across the Channel, we know, have a faculty for seeing the ludicrous side of things in general, and of their foreign neighbours in particular. Many an English character stands impaled on French satire for as long as the French language shall last, and Germans have suffered even more from the brilliance of Gallic wit and the malice of Gallic raillery.

But there is no malice, although some raillery and much wit, in the portrait which Madame de Sévigné in her famous letters draws of her German friend, Charles de La Trémoille's widow, the Princesse de Tarente, or *la bonne Tarente* as the letter-writer generally calls her.

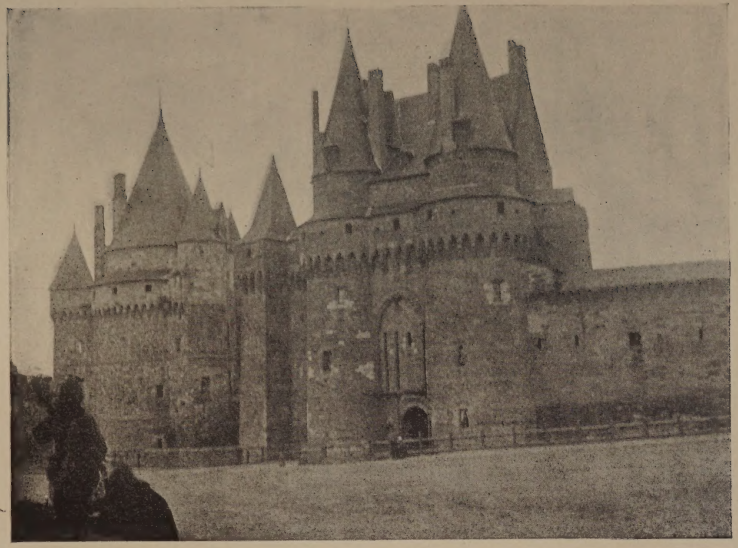
After the Prince's death, Madame de Tarente used to reside during the summer in the La Trémoille château of Vitré. There she found herself but two miles from the Marquise de Sévigné's country seat of Les Rochers. The Princess and the Marchioness rapidly struck up a friendship. Both Madame de Tarente's royal connections and her travels in Europe deeply impressed Sévigné. "*La bonne Tarente* is related to all the royalties in Europe," she wrote. And on one of the rare occasions when she found the Princess out of mourning, "I am pleased to see that the health of Europe is good," exclaimed the Marchioness.

[1] This chapter appeared in *The Englishwoman*, and it is a pleasant duty to thank the Editor, Miss Goodman, for her kindness in permitting its reproduction.

In the eyes of Sévigné, who had never been out of France, Tarente's two visits to Denmark, and frequent sojournings in Holland, constituted her a great traveller. "That's what I call travelling," wrote the Marquise, and she took it in all seriousness when her friend asserted that she was never so well as when going round the world.

Some journeys, short but formidable in those days of bad provincial roads, the Princess and the Marchioness undertook in company. Together they visited their country neighbours, and even went so far as the capital of their province, Rennes. In one remote country house they were surprised to find the most elegant repast they had partaken of for a long while: turtles and quails, peaches and pears as fine as those of the Hôtel de Rambouillet at Paris, led them to reflect that money, even in the heart of the provinces, can procure anything.

It was on one of the hottest days in August that the two ladies made what was nothing more or less than a triumphant entry into Rennes. This ceremony Madame de Sévigné describes in one of her liveliest letters. She tells how they were met a short distance out of the town by a company of guards, then by the Governor of the Province with two Presidents of provincial parlements and eight other dignitaries. "We stopped," writes the Marchioness, "we kissed, we perspired, we talked, not knowing what we said, we advanced in a six-horsed coach, followed by five such coaches and by six others drawn by four horses. We listened to trumpets, to drums, and to people who were all determined to shout out something . . . then, alighting at the Governor's house, we were received by his wife and four dames and four damsels of quality. We all kissed, men as well as women! How odd it was!



THE LA TRÉMOILLE CHÂTEAU AT VITRE

But the Princess set the example and I followed with amiable alacrity. In the end, so intense was the heat, and so copiously were we perspiring, that our cheeks stuck together in perfect union. Extricating ourselves with difficulty, we returned to our coach, so dishevelled as to be quite unrecognisable."

Once established in the country for the summer, it was seldom that the two friends could be induced to quit their peaceful parks and linden groves. There for some years, from 1675 until 1685, they were accustomed to spend July, August, and September, exchanging ceremonious visits or dropping in unexpectedly and vying with one another in the preparation of elaborate fricassées or simple *al fresco* luncheons. Sauntering along those garden walks of Les Rochers, which, still redolent of the atmosphere of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, even to-day bear the names given them by the *Précieuse* Marquise, "the Temperament of my Mother," "the Honour of my Daughter," "the Infinite," "the Echo," "the Solitary," these two high-born dames exchanged many a confidence and told many a tale on all manner of topics, ranging from drugs and dogs to daughters.

The talk fell on dogs one day when Sévigné whistled to a neighbour's spaniel who crossed their path. "What! you know how to call a dog!" exclaimed her companion, marvelling at the variety of her friend's accomplishments. "I will send you one of the prettiest in the world." "No, thank you," replied the Marquise, "I have decided not to be led into any such kind of attachment."

Her protests were vain, however. For a day or two later there arrived at Les Rochers a servant carrying "a little dog's house, delicately perfumed and extremely beautiful." In it was a lovely little creature, "such ears,

such a silky coat, such sweet breath, as tiny as a sylphid, as fair as a fairy."

" Never was I more surprised or embarrassed," writes the Marquise. " I wanted to send him away, but could not find it in my heart to do so. And so he stays, sleeping in his little house in my maid's room, and eating nothing but bread. His name is Fidèle. He is so pretty, such a dear, such pretty little ways, such perfect behaviour. I am resolved not to love him, but he begins to grow fond of me, and I fear lest I may succumb. But if I did, how could I ever face Marphise [her little dog in Paris] ? For I have aspired to that perfection of never loving but one dog in defiance of M. de la Rochefoucauld's maxim that there may be many women who have never had a love affair, but very few who have had only one. The thought of Marphise obsesses me. I can't imagine what to say to her or how to excuse myself. This is the kind of thing that makes one untruthful. All I could do would be to tell her how the entanglement arose. It is just one of those embarrassments which I had made up my mind to avoid. What a striking example of human weakness is this disaster which has befallen me at Vitré ! "

The gift of a lap-dog was only one of the many kindnesses which *la bonne Tarente* pressed upon her somewhat reluctant friend. The Princess was one of those practical housewives, who have a remedy for every disease and every accident, and who, when accidents and diseases do not exist, insist on inventing them. She loved to relate the wonderful cures effected by her wonderful medicines. " She tells me she has studied physic in Germany," wrote the Marchioness, " but I think it must have been after the manner of the *Médecin malgré lui.*" And, indeed, Tarente was inclined to hold with Molière's " doctor, against his will," that physic is as necessary in health as in sickness.

CHARLOTTE AMÉLIE DE LA TRÉMOILLE,
PRINCESS OF ALTENBURG

From a miniature at Middachten, belonging to Count Bentinck
photographed by Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond

But Sévigné did not agree with her. "I am quite ready to take her nostrums when I am ill; but why should I when I am well?" she protested.

When illness came, however, she was not so very docile a patient. Medicinal tea-drinking was then the vogue, and the Princess's family was much addicted to it. Her nephew, the Landgraf, so she said, took forty cups every day, but Sévigné did not believe her. The Princess herself took twelve. Yet when she prescribed one modest little cup for the Marquise, her friend turned from it with horror, declaring it would make her sick.

The Princess's passion for medicaments as well as her Teutonic wit ("she did not lack wit of *a kind*," wrote Sévigné), were fully compensated for by the fact that she too had a daughter, Charlotte Amélie, whom at the close of the last chapter we left arriving with her mother at the court of Denmark.

Before her journey to Denmark, numerous husbands, among them two future kings of England, William of Orange and James, Duke of York, had been proposed for Charlotte Amélie. But at Copenhagen she herself conquered two illustrious hearts: George of Denmark, the King's brother, a handsome gallant prince, and Griffenfeld, the King's minister, a wine merchant's son who had risen rapidly to be the ablest diplomat in Europe, and one of the wisest statesmen Denmark has ever produced, both fell in love with her.

The rival claims of those two suitors were discussed at length in the linden groves of Les Rochers and in Madame de Sévigné's letters to her daughter. All Griffenfeld's recommendations were eclipsed by his not being a gentleman born. "The mere thought of it is enough to make one faint," wrote the Marchioness, and Charlotte Amélie

shared her opinion, defying the King and Queen, who had determined that she should marry the minister.

To the Prince, on the other hand, Mdlle. de La Trémoille was ready to give her heart. But for him the King and Queen had more ambitious designs, and eventually, in 1687, they married him to the Princess Anne, afterwards Queen of England.

Thus disappointed, Charlotte Amélie wept and entreated the King and Queen to send her back to France. But her royal cousins refused; and the distressed maiden was reduced to pouring out her woes to her mother in voluminous letters, which were shown to Sévigné, and commented on unfavourably by that mistress of the epistolary art. Writing to her daughter, the Marquise described them as "in no style whatever, my dear, and filled with dear *mamas* and other childish epithets, although she is twenty."

A war between Denmark and Sweden soon carried Mademoiselle's two suitors to the front. The minister, whom she was never to see again, took a dignified leave of his lady, entreating her to grant him her esteem if not her love.

A year later, falsely accused by his enemies at court of plotting against the King, this eminent statesman, in spite of the excellent reforms he had accomplished in Denmark, was tried and condemned to death. Conducted to the scaffold, he was about to lay his head upon the block, when a messenger arrived to commute the death sentence into one of banishment. Some years later Griffenfeld died in exile.

Mdlle. de La Trémoille was not long in recovering from her attachment to the Prince. Her ambition, so she confided to a friend, was now to be the widow of a Dutch-

DN. PETRUS COMES DE GRIFENFELD ET TONSBERG MAGNUS REGNI DANIÆ CANCELLARIUS EQUES AURAT. ORD. ELEPH. ET DANEBR. etc
Ætat. XXXVIII. A.C. CIↃIↃCLXXV.
Pingitur hic facies. Divinæ at munera mentis,
Orbis quæ stupuit, pingere nemo potest.
Th. Bartholin.
Conr. Woumans sculpsit
Dan. Paulli excudit

man with a castle. Some time after, a gentleman came to her saying that a friend of his was a Dutchman, and had a castle, and that he was so deeply in love with Mademoiselle, that if she married him, he would be sure to die of happiness in six months. Then he declared himself to be the friend, and Charlotte Amélie married him forthwith without waiting for the permission of her family.

La bonne Tarente was furious, and flew to her neighbour for consolation. But Sévigné took Charlotte Amélie's part, maintaining that she had done quite right to marry this Count Anthony of Altenburg (Ochtensilbourg she called him with her mania for distorting German names), who, although of somewhat equivocal origin, was a cousin of the King of Denmark, and the richest nobleman, and the most perfect gentleman in the world.

The romantic story of Count Anthony's birth has formed the subject for several novels. His father, Count Anthony Gunther, had in early years contracted a secret marriage with a noble Hungarian lady, Elizabeth von Ungnad, of great beauty and many accomplishments. But the Count's mother had planned for her son a still greater alliance, and, through one of her courtiers, succeeded in gaining possession of the marriage contract and committing it to the flames. The lady Elizabeth, in despair at the destruction of her marriage lines, fled to a friend at whose castle she gave birth to the son who was to become Charlotte Amélie's husband. Count Gunther married a princess of Holstein, while Elizabeth was subsequently united to a nobleman of Friesland. In later years Count Gunther, repenting of the injury he had done his son, obtained the Emperor's permission to restore him to all his legitimate rights. Anthony eventually succeeded his father as Count of Altenburg, and took

his seat in the Imperial Diet, a privilege only accorded to the members of reigning houses.

Charlotte Amélie, by marrying Anthony, had therefore made for herself a very brilliant match. "Yet," wrote Madame de Sévigné, "all Germany groans at the insult inflicted on the escutcheon of *la bonne Tarente* . . . who is very angry." But after a while the Princess was somewhat pacified, especially when there arrived letters telling of her daughter's wealth and happiness, and of the grand state she kept in her husband's dominions on the banks of the Weser, where she was entertaining the King and Queen of Denmark with all their court.

But alas! Count Anthony was in too great a hurry to keep the promise he had made when first urging his suit. Then he had undertaken to make his wife a widow six months after their marriage. He anticipated his engagement by eight weeks. Four months after her wedding the Countess of Altenburg had realised part of her ambition: she was the widow of a Dutchman, but not unhappily with a castle.

For Count Anthony's daughter by a previous marriage claimed all his dominions and all his property for her husband, and persisted in the claim even when some months later the widowed Countess gave birth to a son.

Beset by every kind of persecution, Charlotte Amélie took her child to Vienna to plead his cause at the Imperial Court. There she arrived travel-stained and weary, poverty stricken and in old-fashioned clothes, for it was only by selling her service of plate that she had succeeded in collecting enough money for the journey. The Viennese ladies-in-waiting laughed at her quaint appearance. But the Empress exclaimed: "That lady is the descendant of Kings, and it is rather for me to do her

homage than for her to seek me." The Empress befriended her, and the infant Count was restored to his father's dominions. Charlotte Amélie's son lived to have a daughter, Charlotte Sophie,[1] whose hand, after being solicited by six princes of reigning German houses, was eventually bestowed on Count Bentinck, the second son of William III.'s trusted friend, the Earl of Portland.

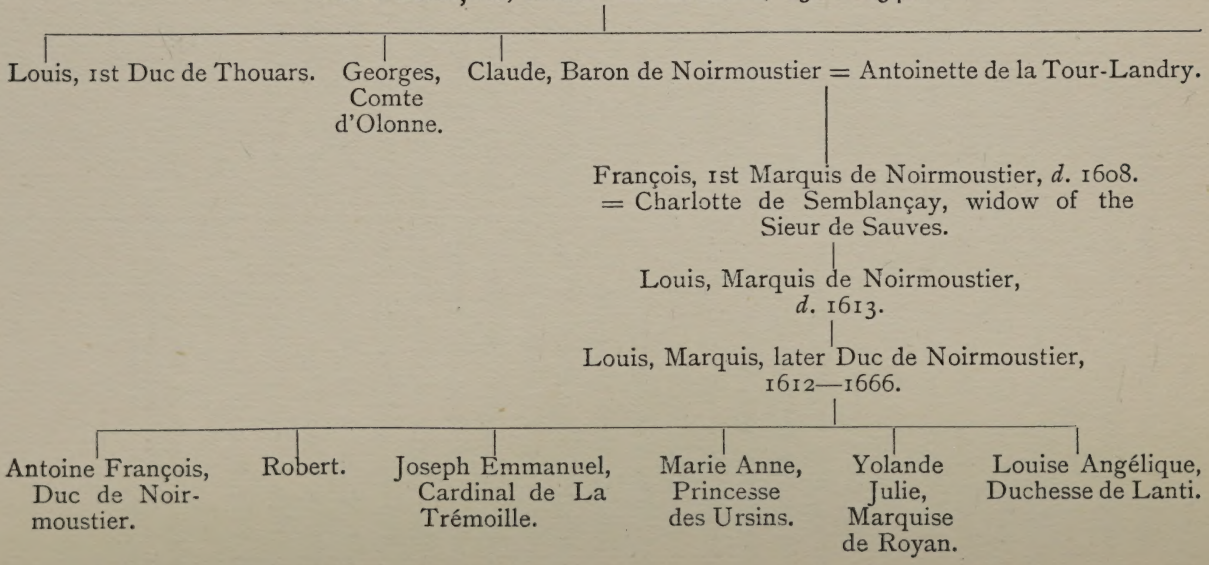
To Charlotte Amélie's misfortunes after her husband's death, Madame de Sévigné's letters make no allusion. For this part of her story we are indebted to her own Memoirs, the original MS. of which is preserved in the Grand Ducal Library at Oldenburg.[2]

Five years after Charlotte Amélie's marriage the intercourse between her mother and the Marchioness came to an end. Then by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, the Princess de Tarente was driven from France. Previous to that year she had been free to exercise her own religion, " to work out her own damnation in perfect liberty," as her quizzical Catholic neighbour was pleased to word it, " and to indulge in as many fasts and retreats as we who possess the reality." But in 1685, the good Tarente returned to her Fatherland, to Frankfort, where she died of smallpox in 1692. Years after they had parted, Madame de Sévigné looked back tenderly on their friendship. Writing to her daughter in 1689, she refers to a story which reminds her of the tales told by " the good Princesse de Tarente."

[1] See her Life and Times, by Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond, in two volumes, published by Hutchinson, 1911.

[2] See *ante*, 184 and note 2.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE, SHOWING THE DESCENT OF THE YOUNGER BRANCH OF THE LA TRÉMOILLES FROM FRANÇOIS, COMTE DE THOUARS, 1502—1541.


Louis, 1st Duc de Thouars.
Georges, Comte d'Olonne.
Claude, Baron de Noirmoustier = Antoinette de la Tour-Landry.
François, 1st Marquis de Noirmoustier, d. 1608. = Charlotte de Semblançay, widow of the Sieur de Sauves.
Louis, Marquis de Noirmoustier, d. 1613.
Louis, Marquis, later Duc de Noirmoustier, 1612—1666.
Antoine François, Duc de Noirmoustier.
Robert.
Joseph Emmanuel, Cardinal de La Trémoille.
Marie Anne, Princesse des Ursins.
Yolande Julie, Marquise de Royan.
Louise Angélique, Duchesse de Lanti.

CHAPTER IX

"A LIEUTENANT OF MADAME DE MAINTENON," LA PRINCESSE DES URSINS. 1642(?)—1722

SINCE the fifteenth century, we have been following exclusively the fortunes of the eldest, the Thouars branch of the La Trémoille family. We must now go back a hundred years to the time when from François de La Trémoille's younger sons, Georges and Claude, there sprang the houses of Olonne and Noirmoustier. The Counts of Olonne, endowed later with the marquisate of Rohan, continued until 1708. Perhaps the best known among them was Count Louis, who was the friend of Saint Evremond, with whom he corresponded on the relative merits of Burgundy and Champagne.[1]

The house of Noirmoustier, endured but a few years longer than that of Olonne. It died out in 1733. Its barons rose to be marquises in the sixteenth, and dukes in the seventeenth century. And it was towards the end of its existence, that this branch of the family produced one of the most notable of all the La Trémoilles, Marie Anne de Talleyrand, Princesse de Chalais, later Princesse des Ursins.

The La Trémoille tree had already borne two women famous in war; it now brought forth one, Madame des Ursins, who was no less renowned in diplomacy. Had she lived in our time she might have been described as a

[1] Tallemant des Reaux, "Historiettes," ed. Monmerqué, II. 429.

"militant," for even Sainte-Beuve, although he relegates her to the second rank among stateswomen, admits that she was equal to upsetting at least ten governments.

Three clever women, Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon, Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough, and Marie Anne de La Trémoille, Princesse des Ursins, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, played important parts in European politics. But of the three, we may safely assert our La Trémoille Princess to have been the cleverest. The numerous volumes of her correspondence, which for more than a hundred years have been appearing, all prove the significance of her action during that critical period of European history extending from the Treaty of Ryswick, in 1698, until the death of Louis XIV. in 1715. There is no doubt that at this time her diplomacy contributed to introduce the Bourbons into Spain, and to establish them firmly on the Spanish throne.[1]

Marie Anne de La Trémoille was born about 1642, the precise year is uncertain. Her great grandmother, the famous or infamous Madame de Sauves, figures in the Memoirs of Marguerite de Valois as one of the most attractive and one of the most unscrupulous members of Henry III.'s dissolute Court. Charlotte de Semblançay, Madame de Sauves, who, for her second husband, married François de La Trémoille, Marquis de Noirmoustier, must have been extremely beautiful; a veritable Circe Marguerite calls her. And not unnaturally all the courtiers

[1] On La Princesse des Ursins a whole library has been written. The works chiefly consulted for this Chapter are: the Duc de La Trémoille's "Madame des Ursins et la Succession en Espagne (six vols.); Geoffroy, "Lettres Inédites de la Princesse des Ursins," (1859); and "Lettres Inédites de Madame de Maintenon et de Madame des Ursins" (1826); François Combes "La Princesse des Ursins" (1858); and St. Beuve's essay in the "Causeries du Lundi," V., 319 *et seq.*

FRANÇOIS DE LA TRÉMOILLE, MARQUIS DE NOIRMOUSTIER
From a drawing by Benjamin Foulon

were in love with her, but especially the two royal princes, Marguerite's brother, François, Duke of Alençon, and her husband, Henry of Navarre. Indeed, Marguerite would have us believe that it was Charlotte who first caused a coolness between herself and her husband.

Her gift for intrigue, Madame de Sauves apparently bequeathed to her grandson, La Princesse des Ursins' father, Louis de La Trémoille, who exercised it in another direction. Like his cousin, Henry Charles, Louis de La Trémoille was an eminent *Frondeur;* and as such he is frequently mentioned in the brilliant Memoirs of his friend, the Cardinal de Retz. So skilfully did Louis succeed in steering the barque of his fortune over the shoals and quicksands of this civil war that, escaping disgrace and imprisonment, he succeeded in 1650, in securing a dukedom, although, on account of his participation in the Fronde, he could not obtain its registration. So the title of Duke of Noirmoustier remained merely honorary until 1707.

Louis married Renée Julie Aubry, who belonged to one of those leading legal families known in France as *la noblesse de robe;* and on his death, in 1666, he left six children: a son Antoine François, styled the Duke of Royan and Noirmoustier; a second son, Joseph Emmanuel, who entered the Church and became a Cardinal; another son Robert who died young; and three daughters, Marie Anne, who became the famous Princesse des Ursins; Yolande Julie, Marquise de Royan; and Louise Angélique, Duchesse de Lanti.[1] While plentifully endowed with brains, this generation of the younger La Trémoilles was curiously afflicted with physical infirmity, for the Duke, after an attack of small-pox became blind, Robert was

[1] There were other children who died before their father.

dumb, the Cardinal a hunchback, and the Princesse des Ursins all her life a sufferer from defective sight.

The adventurous career of Marie Anne de La Trémoille began young. When she was only about one and twenty her husband, Adrien Blaise de Talleyrand,[1] Prince de Chalais, killed his adversary in a duel, and was obliged to flee from France.[2] His young wife followed him, and for a while they lived in Spain.

During the four years of her married life in Paris, la Princesse de Chalais had made her début in the society of the Salons. The first glory of the greatest, the Hôtel de Rambouillet, had by that time faded, but other Salons had succeeded it, and the most distinguished was the Hôtel d'Albret, which was the Salon frequented by La Princesse de Chalais and her husband. Here our Princess used to meet a woman who was eventually to exert a powerful influence over her career, Françoise d'Aubigné, then the poverty-stricken widow of the poet Scarron, but later the famous Madame de Maintenon. In after days when both these great ladies had attained to the height of their fortune they used to talk together of these early experiences. And the Princess would tell how as a young wife at the Hôtel d'Albret, she was piqued to see the *bourgeoise* Madame Scarron, who was but a few years her senior,[3] surrounded by great wits and statesmen deferentially hanging on to this young nobody's words while she, a Princess, was left to chatter with the younger members of the company. Then Madame de Maintenon, would retort that, after all, her lot in those days was not so greatly to be envied for often did she

[1] Of the same family as the great diplomatist l'Abbé Talleyrand.
[2] The date of this duel is variously stated, but it probably took place between 1663 and 1666.
[3] She was born in 1635.

long to escape from the high seriousness of her elders, and to join in the noisy prattle of those of her own age.[1]

After some years residence in Spain, the Prince and Princess de Chalais proceeded to Rome, and thence they decided to go to Venice. The Prince went on before his wife ; but, at the village of Maestro not far from Venice, he was taken suddenly ill and died in the year 1670.

It was at Rome that Marie Anne received the news of her husband's death, and at Rome she continued to reside, although there was now nothing to prevent her returning to France. But in the Holy City she had already made many influential friends, among whom was César d'Estrées, Bishop of Laon, the representative of Louis XIV. at the papal court, and soon[2] to be made a Cardinal.

As was frequently the custom of widows in those days, the Princess for some years after her husband's death resided in a convent. But her retirement did not prevent her from visiting the chief salons of Roman society, where she seems to have been greatly admired. Although not exactly a beauty, she was extremely attractive, with an animated expressive countenance, beautiful blue eyes, a charming mouth, and a very fine figure. Moreover, her manners were ingratiating, her voice melodious, and her conversation highly entertaining. Dulness and melancholy she could not abide, and she sympathised with her sister the Duchesse de Lanti, whose first requirement when engaging a gardener was that he should look gay and be cheerful.

Brilliant as a diamond, the Princess had something of the hardness of that jewel. Yet to her first husband she

[1] Madame de Caylus, "Souvenirs" (Mich. et Poujoulat, 1839), Ser. III. Vol. VIII., 478.

[2] 1674.

must have been really attached, or she would not have committed what the worldly Madame de Sévigné described as "the madness" of following him into exile; and her efforts to make the fortunes of her relatives would indicate that she was not devoid of ordinary family affection. But that she lacked any true tenderness of heart may be seen in various passages of her letters: for example, where she marvels at her sister's grief at the death of her little girl, because "after all she was not her only child," or where on the death of a baby of two, she writes to the parent: "It can cause you no great sorrow for at that age you could not know whether the infant would bring you joy or sadness." Had the Princess herself been a mother, perhaps she might have written differently. But, as we shall see, ambition, not love, was her devouring passion.

And this lofty ambition she was soon in a position to gratify. For through the Cardinal d'Estrées, she received a proposal of marriage from the first noble in Rome,[1] Flavio, Duke of Bracciano, a grandee of Spain and the head of the Roman house of Orsini. Ever since the twelfth century, when leaving their native town of Spoleto,[2] the Orsini had settled in Rome, they had been eminent for their number, their valour, their wealth, and the strength of their towers. The honours of the Senate, of the Sacred College, and even of the Papacy[3] had been theirs; they had furnished with queens, France, Naples and Navarre; and during their prolonged rivalry with the Colonna, one large district of Rome extending along the

[1] "*Le premier laïque de Rome,*" St. Simon calls him ("Mémoires," ed. Regnier, V., 41).

[2] Their remoter origin may have been French and they may have been allied to the famous fifteenth century family of Ursins.

[3] No less than six times.

left bank of the Tiber, from the Ponte St. Angelo to the Ponte de 'Quattro Capi, was little more than an Orsini fortified camp.

As we shall see, to identify Louis XIV. with her personal fortunes was ever a part of the Princess's policy, and so it was not until she had obtained permission from "the Great King," that Marie Anne de La Trémoille, then about thirty, consented to wed this middle-aged widower of fifty-five.[1]

Hitherto the Princess had been merely a leader of society. But now as the first citizenness of Rome, and as mistress of a leading Roman Salon, she began to serve a political apprenticeship which was to fit her for a greater career. It was in Rome that she acquired that knowledge of men's hearts which rendered her one of the most eminent diplomatists of her day.[2] And indeed, it is difficult to imagine any city or any circle better fitted for such a training. Rome the centre of the European western world, with its pathetic ruins of so many civilisations, with its relics of so many political systems, with its magnificent monuments, the scattered fragments of which surpass the most eloquent description, can never fail to fire even the most sluggish imagination.

The Rome of the Duchess of Bracciano was beginning to be Rome as we know it. For several decades the city had been enjoying comparative peace. Freed from foreign invaders by the retirement of the French from Italy and from intestine strife by the cessation of the feuds between the great families, Roman nobles had had leisure for the beautification of their city and especially

[1] The Duke of Bracciano was born in 1620, his second marriage took place in 1675.

[2] *La personne du monde la plus propre a l'intrigue*, St. Simon calls her, adding *et qui avait passé sa vie a Rome.*

of their private palaces. In 1675, the great artistic genius of the age, the Michael Angelo of the century, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, at once sculptor, painter and architect, was adorning with his monuments the squares, the palaces and the churches of Rome. Our Duchess must have gazed with wonder on the great works of his hand, on the grand colonnade before St. Peter's, on the Barberini palace, on the dolphins of the ingenious Barberini fountain in the square, and on the elephant bearing its ancient obelisk in front of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. But nowhere did the great artist more lavishly display his gifts than in the fountains which adorn the Piazza Navona, where the Duchess now came to live.

From very ancient times the Piazza Navona, the Circus Agonalis[1] of imperial Rome, had been the bustling centre of civic life. And now, in 1675, its importance had by no means dwindled. Here, as from time immemorial, was still transacted the business of those lotteries which even to-day figure large in an Italian's life. Here on high holidays, the square was flooded for the celebration of those famous Naumachia, which in the following century were to entertain the exiled Stuarts. Here in the balcony of the Orsini palace,[2] many a scene of pomp and splendour was to be enacted for the benefit of the Roman populace. This great mansion stood at the southern angle of the square on the site now occupied by the Palazzo Braschi. Close at hand was the mutilated statue of Patroclus, on which for years the Romans had been wont to hang satirical remarks about their fellow citizens. Owing to the skill of the tailor Pasquino in composing these gibes, the statue was named after him, the lampoons themselves

[1] *Agona* became *Nagona*, hence the modern *Navona*.
[2] Later, in the eighteenth century, the Orsini resided, as they do now, in part of the Theatre of Marcellus.

christened Pasquinadi, and the name of the sartorial wit extended to the neighbouring palace, so that the Palace of the Orsini became the Palazzo Pasquino.

A circumstance which seems to be strangely discordant with the high dignity of the Orsini family appears in one of the Princess's letters where we find that the outer rooms of the palace, probably those giving on the square, were let to some thirty shopkeepers. Moreover, these tenants were not even of good reputation, for years later, after the Duke's death, and as the result of police investigations, one shop was discovered to be a smugglers' den, and another a nest of gamblers. Yet they and the Duchess depended for their water-supply on the self-same fountain, that in the palace court-yard; Bernini's fountains in the square were apparently only for show. And we can well imagine the tradesmen's wives, bearing bronze pitchers poised skilfully on their heads, eternally gossiping round the fountain in the court-yard.

Notwithstanding its shop frontage, the Palazzo Pasquino was one of the most princely residences in Rome, filled with costly and countless tapestries, pictures, statues and all manner of artistic treasures. And here the brilliant Duchess, in all the maturity of her dazzling charms, opened a salon which became a second Hotel de Rambouillet. To the Pasquino Palace for some seventeen years flocked all that was most distinguished in Rome,—Cardinals, princes, ambassadors, and great ladies, attracted by the wit and the charm of Madame la Duchesse and of her sister, Louise Angélique whom she had married to an Italian nobleman, the Duke of Lanti. The comedies and concerts given by the Duchess of Bracciano at the Palazzo Pasquino were the great events of Roman society, talked of and written about for months beforehand. In a letter

to the Duchess of Lanti in 1685, the Princess mentions as one of her visitors a Mr. Talbot. This may have been the famous Dick Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnel,[1] a veritable Don Juan and a bigoted Roman Catholic, who was suspected of attempting to murder Cromwell and of being implicated in the Popish Plot. For the latter offence he was in exile between 1679 and 1685, and may very likely have visited the Duchess of Bracciano in Rome.

In the gay salon of the Palazzo Pasquino there was one person who was not happy. The master of the house felt himself overshadowed by his brilliant and imposing wife, who was also his intellectual superior. Moreover, the elaborate costly entertainments the Duchess devised tended to increase the financial embarassments from which for some years the Duke had been suffering ; for his estates though vast were heavily mortgaged. These causes probably led to an estrangement between husband and wife which, by the year 1685, had become so serious, that the Duchess was glad to leave her husband and to visit France.

Between that date and 1698, when the Duke died, his wife spent long periods in her native land. She wrote frequently to her friends in Italy from Paris, Versailles, Fontainebleau, Vichy, and also from St. Germain, whither she had gone to be present at the confinement of her friend, the exiled Queen of England. During these visits our Duchess was careful to cultivate court friendships, renewing her acquaintance with Françoise d'Aubigné, now Marquise de Maintenon and wife of Louis XIV., ingratiating herself with *Le Grand Monarque* himself, and with his minister of foreign affairs, le Marquis

[1] See "Dictionary of National Biography," under Talbot, Richard.

de Torcy, and impressing all these personages with her ability and her desire to serve France.

One of her most valuable friends at the French court was La Maréchale de Noailles, who, despite her large family of twenty-one children, was ever ready to further her friend's fortunes at the French court. Adrien Maurice, the eldest of the twenty-one, had married Madame de Maintenon's favourite niece, Mademoiselle d'Aubigné. So Madame de Noailles was a powerful person at Versailles ; and while she did her best for the Princess, Madame des Ursins in return tried to marry off some of the Maréchale's daughters. " If only you will get me this appointment in Spain," she wrote, " at Madrid I can find husbands for a dozen of your girls."

Returning to Rome, the Princess there followed the same policy of self-advancement which she had pursued in France. Thus she succeeded in gaining a footing at the papal court, where the Pope, Innocent XII., declared her advice to be better than that of many cardinals, and at the Spanish embassy, where Cardinal Portocarrero, Bishop of Toledo, became her intimate friend. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of these friendships, which were later to exercise a powerful influence not only on the Princess's personal career, but on the course of European politics.[1] For at Rome and elsewhere, these friendships were to prove very useful to the cause of France.

It was Portocarrero who, shortly before the Duke's death, effected a reconciliation between the Princess and her husband, so that Bracciano when he died left his widow all his vast domains which, however, were heavily burdened with debt. Moreover, on her husband's decease, Marie Anne found herself involved in a law suit

[1] See *post*, 228.

with a rich Roman noble, Don Livio Odescalchi, who contested the succession contending that the Duke had adopted him as his son and heir. The legal proceedings continued for some years, during which the Duchess, as was her wont with those who opposed her, wrote numerous letters to her friends which were most damaging to her adversary, whom she did not hesitate to describe as *ce crasseux de prince.* In the end, and partly through the intervention of Louis XIV., Don Livio purchased Orsini's country estates and the title of Duke of Bracciano for 2,000,000 livres, while leaving to the Duchess the Palazzo Pasquino with its furniture and the right to style herself Princess Orsini, or, as she was more commonly called " Princesse des Ursins."

After her husband's death the Princess's relations with the French court became closer, and her salon more political. Now, almost equally with the Ambassador, she was regarded as the representative of France in Rome. In 1699, Louis XIV. granted her a pension. And about the same time she was permitted to affix the arms of France to the gates of her palace, a privilege which the King had withdrawn from Bracciano on account of his having taken the Pope's part in a dispute about the status of the French ambassador in Rome.

Of the restoration of the French arms to her palace wall, Madame des Ursins made a great public event. No pomp or pageantry was omitted. The occasion was a high day and a holiday in Rome. In the morning a vast throng assembled in the piazza to listen in silence while the praises of *Le Grand Monarque* were read in the palace balcony. In the evening the halls of the Palazzo Pasquino were crowded with a distinguished company of great Roman ladies, ambassadors, cardinals and cavallieri,

MARIE ANNE DE LA TRÉMOILLE, PRINCESSE DES URSINS

before whom artistes from the Pope's own chapel performed a cantata specially composed and representing three majestic personages, Glory, Religion and the Tiber.

The French Ambassador, the Prince of Monaco, who was an intimate friend of Madame des Ursins, did not neglect to send "the Great King" a detailed account of all these proceedings.

With Monaco's predecessor at Rome, the Cardinal de Bouillon, Madame des Ursins had been on anything but amicable terms, for she had a faculty for making enemies as well as friends. Complaints of "this little man who is craftier than you could possibly imagine," fill pages of the Princess's letters to la Maréchale. Involved in this quarrel with the Cardinal was the Princess's brother, the Abbé de Noirmoustiers, whom she had brought to Rome and raised to an influential position only, as she complained, that he might side with "her implacable enemy" against her.

According to the Duke of Berwick,[1] James II.'s natural son, who visited the Princess in Rome, the quarrel turned on the most trivial questions, mere matters of etiquette: the Cardinal felt slighted because, at the time of Bracciano's death, he had been left to dine alone in an ante-chamber of the Palazzo Pasquino, and had not, as etiquette required, been invited to the Duchess's room, there to partake of his repast at the foot of her bed. On her part, the Duchess was furious because the Cardinal had denied her what she claimed as the special privilege of the Orsini family, the right to hang her palace with purple, the mourning colour of kings and cardinals. We suspect, however, that the true cause of the quarrel lay deeper

[1] "Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick," ed. Mich. et Poujoulat, Ser. III., Vol. V., 345.

than these querulous quibblings, and that it sprang from a very natural jealousy between the accredited ambassador of France and the highly trusted but unofficial agent of the French King. A similar coolness arose when the Princess went to Spain, and in both cases she obtained the recall of her enemy.

Bouillon's successor, the Prince of Monaco, profiting from his predecessor's experience, was careful not to openly oppose this all-powerful lady; at the same time, determining not to be under her thumb, he declined her repeated invitation to reside in her palace; and he adroitly urged as his reason just that consideration which such a queen of intriguers would most readily appreciate, viz.: that a public association with the Ambassador might weaken the indirect influence which it was important for her to exercise in favour of France.

A time was now approaching when Madame des Ursins was to need the help of every friend and the employment of every influence, whether secret or avowed. For in the crisis to which Europe, in the last years of the century, was rapidly hastening, the Princess perceived a field for the employment of her diplomatic gifts far wider than any upon which she had entered hitherto. And here in our personal history we must pause for a moment to take a bird's-eye view of the condition of Europe in 1698 and 1699.

In those years the great Spanish Empire upon which the sun never set, that vast assemblage of states built up throughout a hundred years by an accumulation of inheritances, was threatened with dissolution. The childless weakling who now sat upon the throne of Charles V. and Philip II. was swiftly sinking into his grave, while some half-dozen great princes of Europe with covetous

eyes were watching his decline, eager to pounce on his possessions. The Duke of Savoy, the Duke of Orléans, the King of Portugal, the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, the Emperor Leopold and Louis XIV. all considered they had a right to don the crown about to fall from the feeble head of King Charles II. of Spain.

But outside this group of claimants there was a power which had already asserted its strength in Europe and was prepared, if need were, to do so again. The power or twin powers of Holland and England, now united under one ruler, William, Stadtholder of Holland and King of England, were determined to prevent any one European prince from entering into the undivided inheritance of Philip II. These maritime powers, as they were called in the diplomatic parlance of the day, negotiated the two partition treaties of 1698 and 1700. By the first the Spanish dominions were divided between Louis' son, the Dauphin, the Emperor's son, the Archduke Charles, and the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, whose share included the kingdom of Spain. Only a few months after the signing of this treaty by France, England and Holland, the death of the Electoral Prince rendered another treaty necessary. Therefore, at the Hague in March, 1700, the three Powers executed another partition of the Spanish dominions between the two remaining princes, the Dauphin and the Archduke Charles, to the latter being assigned the crown of Spain.

But while the three northern powers were thus carving up the Spanish dominions, the Spaniards themselves had their own views as to the fate of their kingdom and its dependencies; and one idea they held most strongly: they were determined that never should the monarchy of Philip II. be dismembered, and that whosoever,

whether Habsburg or Bourbon, succeeded to a part, must necessarily succeed to the whole.

Simultaneously therefore with the negotiations at the Hague were proceeding others at Madrid. These were carried on by the French and the Austrian Ambassadors in the interests, on the one hand, of the Bourbon, and on the other of the Habsburg claimant. Each ambassador was endeavouring to persuade Charles II. to make a will bequeathing the whole of his dominions to the claimant he (the ambassador) supported—in the case of Comte d'Harcourt, the French Ambassador, it was the Dauphin or one of his sons; in the case of Comte d'Harrach, the Austrian Ambassador, it was the Archduke Charles.

Louis XIV. therefore was conducting two sets of negotiations in contrary directions; while at the Hague he was promising the maritime powers that the Spanish dominions should not pass into one hand, at Madrid he was straining every effort to obtain the whole inheritance for a member of his family. And in the end it was the French Ambassador at Madrid who won the day. In addition to his own brains, which were some of the sharpest, Comte d'Harcourt was able to employ in the French interest the influence of Portocarrero, who had now returned to Madrid from Rome, where La Princesse des Ursins had won him for the French cause. At length the scale was finally turned in favour of France, by a letter received by Charles II. from the Pope, Innocent XII. He, too, Madame des Ursins had won for France, and now he wrote advising the King to leave his dominions to the grandson of Louis XIV. Charles II., who was a devoted son of Mother Church, obeyed the Pope's behest, and on October 2nd, 1700, made a will leaving to Philip, Duke of

Anjou, the Dauphin's second son, the monarchy of Spain with all its dependencies.

A month later, on November 1st, Charles died. There were few who knew the contents of the King's will. The French Ambassador himself was ignorant of the success of his intrigues.

The announcement of a decision which was of such vast importance not only for Spain but for the whole of western Europe attracted to the palace a curious crowd. The will was opened in the Council Chamber of the late King, in the presence of his Junta or Cabinet. What happened outside has been graphically described by St. Simon.[1] "All the rooms adjoining the Council Chamber, where the will was being read," he writes, "were crowded almost to suffocation. The foreign ambassadors were conspicuous as they pushed eagerly forward, each anxious to be the first to inform his court of the choice made by the King. Blécourt[2] was there, for he was as ignorant as they respecting the secret. Count d'Harrach, the Emperor's ambassador, was standing just in front of the door of the Council Chamber. He bore himself triumphantly, for he relied upon the will's being in favour of the Archduke, and his hopes for his own future were high. At last the door opened for a moment and there appeared the Duke of Abrantes, a man greatly feared for his malicious wit. He had slipped out of the Council Chamber as soon as the reading of the will was over for the enjoyment of disclosing the great secret. Instantly he was beset by the crowd. He gazed calmly upon them, but maintained a solemn silence. Blécourt approached. The Duke regarded him vacantly, and then, turning away his head,

[1] In his "Mémoires," ed. Regnier, VII., 291—292.
[2] The French Ambassador who had succeeded Harcourt.

appeared to be searching for some other person. This action surprised Blécourt, and was interpreted by all as auguring ill for France. Suddenly the Duke seemed to become aware of the presence of Count d'Harrach. A joyful expression illumined his countenance, and throwing himself into his arms, he exclaimed aloud in Spanish, 'Señor, it is with great pleasure'—here he made a pause and again embraced him, 'Yes, Señor, it is with heartfelt joy that from henceforth'—here he made a second pause. 'It is indeed with infinite satisfaction that I now part from you and take a final leave of the august house of Austria.' Count d'Harrach's astonishment and indignation deprived him of all power of utterance. He stood quite still for a moment, and then left the room, fuming with rage and disappointment."

In London and Amsterdam, in Vienna and Rome, where no one knew of Louis' intrigues at Madrid, the great question was whether the French King, in defiance of the Partition Treaty, would accept for his grandson the bequest of Charles II. Madame des Ursins, who had so effectually seconded Harcourt's scheming, can have had no doubt as to the result of that conference, which Louis, as soon as the contents of the will were communicated to him, made a point of holding with his ministers. And there can have been no surprise in that astute lady's mind when shortly afterwards she heard that Louis had summoned his grandson in order to declare to him his decision in the presence of the whole court. "Sir," said Louis, pompously addressing the young Prince, "the King of Spain has made you King; the grandees invite you; the people long for you, and I consent; to be a good Spaniard will henceforth be your first duty; but remember that you were born a Frenchman." On November 24th

Philip V. was proclaimed King of Spain ; and a few days later, on December 4th, the new King, then a youth of seventeen, set forth for his dominions, his grandfather bidding him farewell in majestic words which have become famous : " Go, henceforth the Pyrenees have ceased to exist."

At first it seemed as if Europe would quietly acquiesce in the accession of a Bourbon to the throne of Spain. Europe was tired of war, and especially England, which hitherto had borne the brunt of the great struggle against Louis XIV. In England, William, who would willingly have reopened the conflict, was becoming more and more unpopular, and the Tories, who were then the peace party, were in the ascendant. Had not Louis himself committed an extraordinary blunder there might have been no war of the Spanish succession. On September 6th, 1701, the exiled King, James II., died at St. Germain, and straightway, Louis, violating a clause in the Treaty of Ryswick which pledged him to withdraw all support from the exiled Stuarts, recognised his son James as King of England. Instantly English apathy vanished. Whigs and Tories joined in condemning the action of the French court. From London and from every corner of the realm resounded a cry for war. Assured of England's help, Holland and Austria took up arms ; the Archduke Charles having formally laid claim to the Spanish monarchy on May 15th, 1702, a declaration of war was published simultaneously by England, Holland and the Empire.

In the direction of this war and indeed in the course of European history for the next fourteen years Madame des Ursins was to play a prominent part. On hearing that the Great Monarch had accepted King Charles's bequest for his grandson, the Princess had written con-

gratulating Louis on the " great event," which, as she put it, " seemed to have happened expressly in order to raise His Majesty's glory far above the imagination of mankind." At the same time in a letter to Torcy she rejoiced over the accomplishment of that affair, which for fear of the misfortunes it might give rise to had caused all Europe to tremble, but was now by the merit of the King alone, the sovereign arbiter, arranged for the peace of Christendom. " What glory, O my God," she concluded, " but also what moderation ! "

In the accomplishment of this great affair Madame des Ursins was not slow to discern a way to her own advancement, and in what manner with admirable lucidity she explained in a letter to la Maréchale. Philip must be provided with a wife, wrote this wily *intriguante*, and as Philip himself was but a youth his wife also must be young. She would require therefore an accomplished woman of the world to direct her, one preferably who should be devoted to French interests and willing to exercise French influence at Madrid ; but who was so fitted to occupy such a post as the writer of this letter ? Had she not effectively proved her skill in diplomacy and her devotion to the interests of France ? Was she not also the widow of a grandee of Spain, and peculiarly fitted for life at the Spanish court by her knowledge of the language and her earlier residence in the country ?

As to the bride who should be chosen for the young King, Madame des Ursins also had her views.

And she suggested Marie Louise, second daughter of Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, sister to the graceful and popular Marie Adelaide, the wife of the Duke of Burgundy, the Dauphin's eldest son.

The letter containing all these proposals la Maréchale

showed to Madame de Maintenon, who doubtless communicated its contents to the King. And Louis seriously considered them. The eminent success of the Duke of Burgundy's marriage with Marie Adelaide, who was a great favourite at court, inclined the King to select another bride from that family. Moreover, as Victor Amadeus was aspirant to the crown of Spain, the alliance would have the advantage of uniting two claims. And so Madame des Ursins' advice was adopted; and the King decided to marry his grandson to the Savoyard Princess, and to make Madame des Ursins her chief lady-in-waiting or *Camerera Major.*

Early in May, 1701, the news of her prospective appointment reached Madame des Ursins. On June 20th she received from His Catholic Majesty, King Philip V., the official announcement that she had been appointed *Camerera Major* and had been chosen to accompany his bride to Madrid. But she had already begun her preparations for departure, and had ordered her travelling coach and the liveries for her servants.

On September 11th Philip married Marie Louise [1] by proxy at Turin. The bride was but a child of thirteen, very young to be sent abroad in such troubled times and into such a disturbed country. Nevertheless, only a few days after the wedding, accompanied by her confessor and a suite of Italian ladies and gentlemen, she set forth for her husband's kingdom. At Villafranca, a port of Savoy, not far from Nice, the Queen met Madame des Ursins, and the first impression which this great lady made upon the royal bride appears to have been favourable. From Villafranca the company proceeded by sea to Antibes.

[1] By her mother, Anne d'Orléans, daughter of Henrietta Maria of England, and the Duke of Orléans, Marie Louise was the great-granddaughter of our King Charles I.

There they were detained by contrary winds, which pursued them so furiously when they continued their voyage that the Queen, who was a bad sailor, suffered greatly. Therefore, at the instance of Madame des Ursins, Louis gave them permission to continue their journey by land. At Figueras, on the Spanish frontier, the *Camerera Major* insisted on the return to Savoy of the Queen's Italian suite. Thereby she completely lost her little mistress's favour ; and it was weeks before she could win it back again. The Duchess of Burgundy, the Queen's sister, on her way to France, had submitted without a murmur ; but the Queen was furious at thus being left with strangers, and she took a dislike to Madame des Ursins, which it took all the *Camerera Major's* tact to overcome.

It was at Figueras, too, that the King met his bride. And not unnaturally he found her in a very bad temper, which considerably marred the completion of the wedding ceremonies. At least, such is the story which St. Simon says was told by the Marquis de Louville, who as the young King's adviser had accompanied him to Spain.

That Philip, who had no reason for sharing his wife's dislike of her *Camerera Major*, soon became attached to Madame des Ursins, we may learn from an amusing letter in which the latter described her new duties.

"How Madame de Maintenon would laugh," she writes, "if she knew all the petty offices I have to perform. Tell her, I entreat you, that it is I who have the honour to present the King with his dressing-gown when he goes to bed, and to give him his slippers when he rises. This I might not object to ; but every evening when the King enters the Queen's chamber, the Count of Beneventum entrusts me with his Majesty's sword . . . and with a

lamp which I generally upset over my clothes. Really, it is too ridiculous. The King would never get up if I did not draw his curtains ; and it would be sacrilege for any one else to enter the room when the King and Queen are in bed. The other day the lamp went out because I had spilt half the oil ; I did not know where the windows were, having reached the place the previous night when they were closed ; I thought I should have broken my nose against the wall, and for a quarter of an hour there were the King of Spain and I knocking up against the furniture feeling for the shutters." [1]

This meticulous ceremonial was a part of that elaborate etiquette which rendered the Spanish court the dullest place in the world. The wife of a previous French Ambassador at Madrid had described the gloom of existence there as so crushing that on entering the Queen's chamber one seemed to feel it, to see it, and to touch it. This gloom Madame des Ursins set herself to dissipate by employing all the ingenuity which she had formerly displayed in her Roman salon, in organising concerts, balls and comedies for the amusement of the royal couple. Italian music was then beginning to be the vogue, and it was the Princess who first introduced it into Spain. The chief amusements of Philip's predecessors seem to have been hunting and the watching of those terrible *autos-da-fé*, relics of mediæval barbarism which the Spanish Inquisition still retained. " Charles II.," writes Macaulay, " enjoyed with the delight of a true Spaniard two delightful spectacles, a horse with its bowels gored out, and a Jew writhing in the fire." It was Madame des Ursins, who, from the time of her arrival in Spain, openly

[1] Written from Barcelona to Madame de Noailles on December 12th, 1701. See " Lettres Inédites de la Princesse des Ursins " (Geoffroy, 1859), p. 144.

condemned these hideous scenes and prevailed upon Philip V. to discontinue them.

The King's confidence the *Camerera Major* won rapidly and completely, but with the Queen it was different. And Marie Louise was long in forgetting how the Princess had parted her from her countrywomen and left her to strangers. One is not surprised, therefore, at the note of sadness in the letters which during the first weeks of her married life the little Queen wrote to her grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Savoy. Of "the lounging, moping boy" who was her husband, Marie Louise writes, "I wish the King would talk more"; then in another letter, "Hunting is the King's favourite amusement; he goes out every day. I sometimes visit convents, which are ugly, or go into the garden. To-day, because it is Sunday, the King will come with us."

Madame des Ursins had to exercise all her tact and charm before she could gain the affection of the homesick Queen. "The King is a charming Prince whose confidence I hope to win. Would to God the Queen resembled him," she wrote. But the Queen's affection was all the more durable for not being lightly given. After a time Marie Louise yielded to the Princess's attractions, and, once having forgotten her grievance, became her devoted and lifelong friend.

Spain under Philip V. may be compared to the household of Themistocles, for while in the latter it was the wife who ruled Themistocles, and the baby who ruled the wife, and therefore the baby who ruled the house, so in Spain it was the Queen who ruled Philip V., Madame des Ursins who ruled the Queen, and therefore Madame des Ursins who ruled Spain. According to Louville, Philip V. was a prince "who does not reign, and who never will." On the

whole, the influence exerted by Madame des Ursins was for the good of the country. The Princess was resolved to render her royal pupil not only happy, but useful. And her design in this respect was soon seconded by fortune. For, but a few months after his marriage, King Philip left Barcelona to conduct the war in Italy, and the Queen was appointed regent during his absence. The Princess contrived that the Queen's office should be no sinecure. Immediately she carried her off to Sarragossa. There, always with her *Camerera Major* at her elbow, the Queen presided over the meeting of the Estates of Castile, much to the chagrin of the deputies, who demurred to the presidency of a woman. Then Marie Louise was taken to Madrid, where her indefatigable *gouvernante* insisted on her being present at the meetings of the Council or Junta, always well chaperoned by the Princess, who had no right whatever to be there, but who eagerly seized on this opportunity to penetrate into the secret mysteries of Spanish government. During those interminable discussions, which lasted usually for six hours, while the little Queen was permitted to amuse herself with needlework, her lady-in-waiting listened eagerly, losing not a word, and carefully reproducing these debates in her letters to Louis XIV.

Those were troubled times for Spain, for in September, 1702, while the King was still absent, the English fleet under the Duke of Ormond entered the harbour of Cadiz and landed an army. The landing of English soldiers, however, was not altogether a misfortune for the Spanish government. The barbarity and greed of the invaders so roused the Spanish national spirit that the peasants to a man volunteered to fight in defence of their country, while nobles and farmers, and even poor folk, gave all

that they had to repulse the foreigner. Madame des Ursins took care that in this crisis the Queen should appear as the organiser of defence, and it was to her that the parish priests brought the savings of their parishioners. One came bearing 120 pistoles. "My flock are ashamed to send you so little," he said, "but they beg you to believe that in this purse there are a hundred and twenty hearts faithful even to the death." The Queen gave her own jewels for the payment of soldiers. She herself offered to go to the coast.

By this time all misunderstanding between Madame and her royal pupil had vanished, and when, early in 1703, King Philip returned to Spain he found them in perfect accord. He himself, during his absence, had so pined for his wife that on his return he fell more passionately in love with her than ever and more completely under her influence.

But that Spain should be governed by two women was the last thing desired by the two Cardinals, the Princess's two old friends, Portocarrero and Estrées, who with her help had been chiefly instrumental in bringing the Bourbons into Spain. It was not in order to make Madame des Ursins the arbiter of Spanish destinies that they had raised Philip V. to the throne. Cardinal d'Estrées was now French Ambassador at Madrid. Portocarrero was the president of the Junta. But they both speedily became such formidable rivals that Madame des Ursins began to scheme against them. By representations to Versailles she obtained Estrées' recall; Portocarrero she persuaded to accept military office, and thus, according to a Spanish law, to effect his own exclusion from the Junta. Even then, however, the Princess's triumph was by no means secure; for the Cardinal

d'Estrées was succeeded by his nephew, the Abbé d'Estrées, who, although he was apparently content to be Madame's subordinate, was all the while working secretly against her and complaining of her conduct in the despatches he sent to France.

Beginning to suspect this treachery, the Princess intercepted one of the Abbé's despatches, wherein she found her suspicions fully justified ; for in this document the Ambassador descanted at length on the scandalous relations which were said to exist between Madame and her secretary d'Aubigné, whom she had brought from Italy. How much truth there was in these allegations it is impossible to tell, neither can we be certain as to what happened to this despatch after the Princess had read it ; for two conflicting stories are told as to its fate, one by the Duke of Berwick, who was at that time commanding the French troops in Spain, and the other by that malicious *raconteur* St. Simon.

St. Simon's story, though probably false, is too amusing not to be repeated here. He tells how Madame des Ursins, having read with comparative calm a long list of accusations against her and her secretary, came to a statement that they were married. This was too great an insult to the pride of a high-born dame ; the charge that d'Aubigné was her lover she might endure, but that she had married the son of a Paris attorney was too much. In her indignation she took up her pen and wrote in the margin : " Married ! certainly not ! " [1] Then, oblivious of this tell-tale comment, she sealed up the despatch to look as if it had never been opened and forwarded it to France. Louis, as was his custom, had the ambassador's letter opened and read before his Council, and great was

[1] *Pour mariés non.*

the merriment at the reading of the Princess's impetuous marginal denial of the Abbé's accusation. Such conduct, however, was beyond a joke, and anger soon succeeded mirth in the breasts of the King and his counsellors.

It is hardly necessary to point out the improbability of St. Simon's story. Madame des Ursins was no fool to commit such a blunder, neither did she ever allow herself to be carried away by indignation. For what most likely happened we must turn to the Duke of Berwick's Memoirs, where he relates, that, having taken a copy of the letter, the Princess added to the original her contravention of the Ambassador's slander, and with complaints of his perfidy forwarded the packet to the King.

Whatever the details may have been, it was this incident which caused Madame des Ursins' fall, and closed the first period of her rule in Spain. For some time there had been two parties at the court of France, the Princess's friends, notably La Maréchale de Noailles and the former Spanish Ambassador, Comte d'Harcourt, who through Madame de Maintenon, besieged the Monarch's ears with praises of the Princess; and her enemies, the chief of whom was Cardinal d'Estrées, who were equally untiring in their complaints against her. For some time Louis had been inclined to agree with the latter; and the intercepted despatch decided him. In May, 1704, Madame des Ursins was recalled. "At length, Madame," she wrote to la Maréchale, "falsehood has conquered truth, and although I may say that never did anyone serve the King with greater zeal and with greater honesty, yet I am treated as a criminal who has betrayed the state while my accusers glory."

The Princess's mission in Spain now appeared an utter failure. Her enemies must have thought that the

diplomatic career of this elderly woman of over sixty was at an end and that nothing remained for her but to withdraw quietly to Rome. Madame des Ursins, however, was not one to be vanquished by adversity: it was in times of mischance that her gifts best displayed themselves; and she never appeared more brilliant than when in a few months she converted this humiliating defeat into a glorious victory.

Her method was first of all to gain time: she was in no hurry to obey Louis' command and to leave the Spanish capital. When at length she did comply it was only to withdraw to Alcala, about twenty miles from Madrid, and there she lingered for five weeks before leisurely pursuing her journey to Bayonne. Then, instead of making for Rome, as her enemies hoped and expected, she went to Toulouse and waited.

Meanwhile in Madrid, since her departure, things had been going from bad to worse: the King and Queen were disconsolate at the Princess's recall; the Spaniards, too, with whom she was very popular, mourned her absence, and none of these circumstances escaped the knowledge of Louis XIV., who, at the same time, was constantly hearing of the injustice of her treatment from Madame de Maintenon and Comte d'Harcourt. Finally, in December, 1704, the Princess obtained just what she wanted—a summons to appear at Versailles; and now she did not delay, but straightway obeyed the King's command. Before the end of January, despite the severity of the weather, she had travelled north and reached Paris.

At the French court she carried everything before her. During her previous visits she can have known little of the King. During her three years' residence in Spain, Louis had shown respect for her judgment, and on one

occasion[1] he even countermanded an order at her request.

But any esteem in which Louis may have previously held Madame des Ursins was far beneath that he now formed of her. Now she captivated him by her grace and her ability. For hours she remained closeted with the King and with Madame de Maintenon discussing the affairs of Spain. In public the King paid her almost as much deference as if she had been a Queen. At one of the court balls she was seen carrying in her arms a little spaniel, a privilege accorded to no other lady at court, and the King actually caressed it during one of the dances. Sainte-Beuve paints a charming picture [2] of the delightful intercourse enjoyed by these three eminent personages, the great King, Madame de Maintenon and Madame des Ursins. With the last as a third " even the King's intercourse with Madame de Maintenon assumed a new freshness. But of the three," Sainte-Beuve ventures to say, " it was Madame des Ursins who most powerfully dominated the situation, who was the most detached from her part and yet who played it the best."

From the moment of the Princess's arrival at Versailles her return to Spain had been a foregone conclusion ; but her cause was greatly strengthened by the communications which the King was receiving from the Duc de Gramont, then French Ambassador at Madrid. These despatches convinced Louis of Philip's incapacity to govern on his own account, of the Queen's devotion to Madame des Ursins and of her indignation at the disgrace of her *Camerera Major*, which had struck a serious blow

[1] When he had revoked his instructions to the Spanish Government to confiscate the treasure of other nations brought in Spanish galleons into Vigo Bay.

[2] " Causeries du Lundi," ed. 1852, V., 331

at French influence at Madrid. Thus Louis was driven to the conclusion that Madame's return to power was the only possible way of restoring amicable relations between the two countries; and apparently when she had been but a few weeks at Versailles the King requested her to return to Spain. But now she was on her dignity. Now it was her turn to hang back. Now she must have something better than her former equivocal position at Madrid; now the King must not only extend her powers, he must definitely recognise them. And so, at Marly, in an interview between that imposing trio, the Great King, the Great Marchioness and the Great Princess, a document was drawn up and committed to the care of Madame de Maintenon. In this document Louis undertook to increase the Princess's pension, to communicate in future with her direct and not by the intermediary of any ambassador, to pay no heed to any calumnies against her, to relieve her of the duties of *Camerera Major*, which restricted her independence, to appoint as ambassador one of her friends, Amelot, Marquis de Gournay, and finally to contrive that she should be consulted as to the appointment of Spanish ministers.

Such measures practically placed the government of Spain in the hands of the Princesse des Ursins, and constituted her the acknowledged agent of France at Madrid. Her triumph was supreme, she had now surely attained the height of her ambition. And yet, if we may believe St. Simon—and in this matter there is no reason to doubt him—this ambitious woman was not satisfied, she aspired to a position still loftier. From January till June she lingered at the French court. Madame de Maintenon could not understand why. She had conquered, she had triumphed brilliantly, why did she not set out to enjoy

the fruits of her victory? "There is something I cannot understand about Madame des Ursins," wrote the Marchioness, "she can't be induced to depart." St. Simon suggests, and with no improbability, that the feeble health of Madame de Maintenon and the impression which the Princess had obviously made upon the King had so inflated her ambition that she hoped in the event of the Marchioness's demise to become Queen of France, for we may be sure that she would never have consented to a morganatic marriage with the King. But Madame de Maintenon recovered, the Princess's dream vanished; and, on June 29th, 1705, we find her at Amboise, *en route* for Spain.

Her journey to Madrid was a triumphal progress. "Spain receives me," she wrote, "with every conceivable honour and demonstration of joy." Wherever she passed, dances, games, bull fights, fireworks and the discharge of cannon greeted her return. A few miles from Madrid, the French Ambassador came out to meet her. After he had entertained her at a superb banquet, the King and Queen themselves arrived with the whole court. Then in pomp and magnificence they escorted her into the capital, which, amidst the applause of the people, she entered on August 3rd.

It is during the time of her second rule in Spain, between 1705 and 1714, that Madame des Ursins appears to the greatest advantage. She returned to find the country a prey to two evils, civil war and foreign invasion. A strong party led by the Admiral of Castile had gone over to the Austrian Archduke Charles, who called himself King Charles III., and who was then commanding the army sent by the allies to drive the Bourbons from the Spanish throne. Meanwhile an English fleet cruising off the coast

supported the land forces and constantly threatened the harbours of Spain with pillage and desolation. In the face of these disasters nothing but the fortitude, the hopefulness, the resource and the energy of Madame des Ursins could have preserved the throne of Spain for the house of Bourbon.

Madame de Maintenon, blissfully ignorant of the Princess's dream of succeeding her, was now her intimate friend and her most regular correspondent. In her letters she marvels at the cheerfulness with which the Princess breasted this sea of troubles. "My temperament is my best friend,"[1] Madame des Ursins wrote. "Among the many gifts I have received from God is the gift of cheerfulness, which enables me to despair of nothing. I am firmly persuaded that with courage, with diligence and with firmness one may overcome the greatest difficulties, provided always that those who act desire the public good."[2] And throughout those dark days "the public good" that Madame des Ursins desired seems to have been that of Spain, for whose sake she even dared to differ from "the Great King."

On reaching Madrid in the summer of 1705, she found that the allies were rapidly conquering Catalonia and besieging its chief city Barcelona, which fell into their hands on October 9th. The Princess's letters at this time to Chamillard, Minister of War and Finance, to Madame de Maintenon and to La Maréchale de Noailles are full of entreaties for help. After the loss of Barcelona she wrote: "If only at the beginning of the war France had sent us two or three thousand men through Roussillon, we should now be as well as we are badly off. That the

[1] See Geoffroy, "Lettres Inédites de Madame de Maintenon et de Madame des Ursins," p. 259.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 256.

succour did not come was not my fault, for I wrote to your court that it was absolutely necessary." [1]

In spite of the Princess's admirable efforts the prospects of the Bourbons in Spain grew steadily darker until, in 1706, the approach of the allies drove the King and Queen from the capital. "We departed without the barest necessities," wrote Madame des Ursins.[2] "At first the Queen was without a bed. Fortunately the Chevalier de Bragelonne, who commanded our French escort, had a new one, which came in very useful. But other things were not so easily supplied, for (on the first day) Her Majesty had only two eggs for supper, and much the same fare on the morrow." [3]

While the King joined the army, the Queen with Madame des Ursins, one lady-in-waiting and a maid was left at Burgos; and thence with her accustomed gaiety the Princess sent Madame de Maintenon an amusing description of their quarters. "My apartment," she wrote, "consists of only one room some twelve or thirteen feet square. A large window, which refuses to shut, occupies nearly the whole of one wall; a low door leads into the Queen's chamber, and a smaller one into a winding passage which I never dare enter, although there are two or three lamps burning in it, because it is so badly paved that I should break my neck. I can't say that the walls are white, because they are very dirty. My travelling bed is my only piece of furniture, save for a folding chair and a deal table which serves for my toilet, and on which I write and eat my dessert from the Queen's table.

"At all this Her Majesty does nothing but laugh, and I join her."

[1] Geoffroy, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 249.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

One is glad to find that such astounding equanimity in misfortune did not remain unrewarded; after a few weeks' occupation of the capital the allies retreated, and the King and Queen with Madame des Ursins returned to Madrid.

Some months earlier, on December 8th, 1705, the Princess had written at great length[1] to Chamillard on the conduct of the war, and in this letter she had entreated that her old friend, the Duke of Berwick, who in the previous year had been recalled to France, should be sent back to Spain to command the King's army. Her request had been granted. "This great devil of an Englishman," as Berwick was called in Spain, realised all Madame des Ursins' hopes, and it was Berwick's advance which had driven the allies out of Madrid. Now the Princess made superb efforts to efficiently equip his army. In the province of Burgos she raised 8,000 pistoles, in another 15,000, and in wealthy Andalusia still more. Money, food and clothing poured into Berwick's camp; and, as King Philip admitted in a graceful letter to the Princess, it was owing to her energy and resource that he was now able to feed, to clothe and to pay his soldiers.

Madame des Ursins' noble exertions received their recompense when, at Almanza,[2] on April 25th, 1707, Marshal Berwick inflicted a crushing defeat on the allies.

This victory for a time completely restored the fortunes of King Philip V.; and by the end of the year the only part of Spain held by the allies was the northern provinec of Catalonia. The news of the battle was received with

[1] The letter occupies eight pages (213—221) of Geoffroy's book.

[2] The only battle recorded in which an English general at the head of a French army defeated an English army commanded by a Frenchman. The Englishman was, of course, Berwick, the Frenchman, Henri de Ruvigny, Lord Galway.

great rejoicing both in France and at Madrid. Madame des Ursins herself had the joy of announcing it to the King and Queen. Madame de Maintenon, in one of her liveliest letters, related how the news reached the French court.[1] "You know, Marly," she writes, "and my apartments there; the King was alone in my little room; and I in my boudoir, which serves as a passage, was sitting down to table, when an officer of the guards announced at the King's door, M. de Chamillard. The King replied, 'What, is it he?' for naturally he was not expected. I, very much astonished, threw down my napkin, as M. de Chamillard, crying 'It is good news!' went straight in to the King . . . and, as you may imagine, Madame, I went in also. Then I heard of the defeat of the enemy's army and returned to my supper in high spirits."

The year 1707 was one of rejoicing at the court of Spain, for on August 25th a prince was born to the King and Queen. We are amused to find Madame des Ursins taking credit to herself for this auspicious event. The Spaniards, she writes, would have blamed her had their Queen not born an heir. For months the Princess had been on the tip-toe of eager expectation. Long letters on the subject had passed between the two childless old ladies who then controlled the courts of Versailles and Madrid, Madame des Ursins asking for advice as to the selection of nurses for the royal infant, Madame de Maintenon counselling Madame des Ursins to study a graceful attitude for rocking the cradle.

Meanwhile, although fortune was favouring the Bourbons in Spain, in Italy and the north the military gifts of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough were

[1] "Lettres Inédites de Madame de Maintenon et de la Princesse des Ursins," I., 120.

driving Louis XIV. to despair. He was beginning to feel the task of maintaining his grandson on the throne of Spain to be an intolerable burden. The terrible disasters of 1709, the defeat of Malplaquet, and a severe winter followed by plague and famine, confirmed Louis in this idea, in which he was supported by Madame de Maintenon, who desired peace at any price. On this point she had long and bitter discussions with Madame des Ursins, who would never for a moment entertain the idea of abandoning Spain to the Austrians, not even when in September, 1710, the court was again driven from Madrid. In that year, as in 1707, the allies were unable to hold the capital for long, and by December the King and Queen were back again in their capital. Meanwhile the skilful operations of Vendôme caused the enemy to retreat northwards, until once again they were confined within the mountainous strongholds of Catalonia.

This advantage gained by the French in Spain doubtless influenced those negotiations for peace which were now being carried on by the warring Powers. Events in the Peninsula, added to the death of the Emperor Joseph, which, leaving the Archduke Charles the most likely successor to the Imperial throne, rendered his rule in Spain an even greater threat than that of Philip V. to the balance of power in Europe, completely altered Louis XIV.'s position. The King now looked for concessions in return for any sacrifices he might make. From this time the abandonment of Spain to the Austrian house became out of the question, and Madame des Ursins' mind was set at rest.

But no sooner was she relieved from anxiety on behalf of her adopted land and her beloved sovereign than her inveterate ambition returned, and she began to scheme

on her own account. As a part of the settlement which the European Powers were then negotiating, King Philip proposed that on Madame des Ursins and her heirs in full sovereignty should be settled the Duchy of Limburg in the Low Countries. That the King of Spain should wish to bestow on his faithful friend and wise counsellor some acknowledgment of the valuable services she had rendered to him and to his kingdom was only just; but that when this proposal met with opposition Madame des Ursins should have so far insisted on her claims as to drag out the negotiations and to postpone the peace, of which Europe, and Spain specially, stood so greatly in need, seems strangely discordant with the patriotism she had shown earlier in the war; and her old friend the minister, Torcy, did not hesitate to denounce her for this action. While England and Holland were not indisposed to accede to the Princess's demand and to insert the grant of sovereignty in the Peace of Utrecht, the Emperor would not hear of the dismemberment of the Netherlands. And finally, Louis XIV. had to intervene, and to insist on his grandson's commuting the sovereignty of Limburg into a money payment in order that a European settlement might be arrived at.

Even then, after she had been omitted from the Treaty, Madame des Ursins, with her invincible hopefulness, refused to abandon the idea of one day ruling in her own right. Before the Peace of Utrecht she had persuaded King Philip to issue a decree calling upon the grandees to address her as "your highness." Her overweening ambition at this time made her the laughing-stock of Europe and appealed to the humour of Lord Bolingbroke, who, during the negotiations, wrote her a letter,[1] in which

[1] See his "Letters and Correspondence" ed. Parke, 1798. III., 345.

he " your highnessed " her at every line, thinking, as he explained to a friend, that in the absence of means for the gratification of her avarice it might be prudent for England to flatter her vanity.

Meanwhile the Princess insisted on assuming sovereign state ; on her journeys she was escorted by a detachment of the King's guard. She believed that one day Limburg would be hers, and when that day should come, she had resolved to exchange it for a part of Touraine. So absurdly sanguine had she become in her old age that she secretly despatched her secretary d'Aubigné to purchase property near Amboise, and there to construct a vast edifice which was nothing more or less than a royal palace.[1]

But while she was building these airy castles in Spain, and a more substantial one on the Loire, a turn in the wheel of fortune caused the former to vanish like a morning mist, while the latter remained only to be known as the Princess's folly. For on February 14th, 1714, the thread, from which the Princess's vast influence depended, snapped, and Marie Louise, Queen of Spain, died.

For a time this reverse seems only to have inflated the Princess's already overweening ambition, and at first she, an old lady of over seventy, seems to have conceived the extraordinary design of marrying the King of Spain, who was forty years her junior. Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon, knowing her strength of will and the King's weakness, greatly feared that she would achieve her object. And it appears to have been their opposition which brought the Princess to her senses. Then, as if in order to prove to them that she had never intended to do anything so absurd, she hurriedly and without waiting to

[1] The château of Chanteloup.

hear from Versailles, arranged to marry Philip to a Princess of Parma, Elizabeth Farnese. As far as she herself was concerned, Madame des Ursins could not possibly have made a more unfortunate choice. In Elizabeth she met her match. This princess was born for sovereignty. Frederick the Great said of her, that she possessed all the pride of a Spartan, the obstinacy of an Englishwoman, the vivacity of a Frenchwoman, and the craft of an Italian. When she came into Spain, one thing she had determined—that she would not be ruled by the old lady who had so long dominated her predecessor.

The marriage was to take place in December at Guadalaxara, where on the 22nd King Philip arrived, accompanied by Madame des Ursins. There the Princess left the King to await his bride, while she pushed on to meet Elizabeth at a neighbouring village where she was to spend the night. In elaborate court dress, Madame des Ursins was ushered into the Queen's presence, but only to receive an icy reception. In the course of conversation the royal bride took exception to her visitor's dress and to her manners. The Princess, who considered that both were perfectly correct, attempted to justify herself. Whereupon the Queen flew into a temper and commanded " this mad woman," as she called her, to leave her presence. When Madame des Ursins hesitated, Elizabeth, seizing her by the shoulders, pushed her out of the room, at the same time calling for the lieutenant of the guards and the equerry. The first she commanded to arrest Madame des Ursins, the second to prepare a six-horsed carriage, and in it to drive the Princess post haste to the frontier. When the lieutenant represented that the power of arresting a personage of such high rank as the Princess belonged to the King alone, the Queen retorted, what was

perfectly true, that she had in her possession a royal order commanding the lieutenant to obey her in everything.

Madame des Ursins, therefore, was helpless. Without allowing her time to pack up anything or to take any food with her, or even to change her court dress, the Queen had her and her maid unceremoniously bundled into a coach and driven out of Spain. It was seven o'clock on Christmas eve when she started. The night was so bitterly cold that before morning the coachman's hand was frozen off. It is astonishing that at her age the Princess should have been able to survive such a terrible ordeal. At Bayonne she halted in her enforced flight, and wrote to Louis XIV. of the gross indignity to which she had been subjected. To Philip V. she knew but too well it would be useless to appeal, for she realised that as he had been completely dominated by his first wife, so he would be by the second. To her great consolation the Princess received a letter written with the Great King's own hand, condoling with her in her misfortune, and inviting her to come to Paris. That long journey from Bayonne to Paris, which once before she had taken in mid-winter, she now made for the second and last time. Arriving in Paris in the middle of February, 1715, she took up her abode with her brother, the Duke of Noirmoustiers, and waited for a summons to the royal presence.

But that summons was long delayed. At the French court powerful influences were working against her. Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon, since the rumour of her design to marry Philip V., were somewhat afraid of her ambition. Moreover, even Louis' influence was waning; the Great King was ill, his long reign was drawing to a close, the star of the future Regent, the Duke of Orléans, was in the ascendant, and the Duke and his

mother, the erratic Princess Palatine, were Madame des Ursins' bitter enemies. So the Princess waited and waited. When at length the summons to Versailles reached her and she went to lay her grievances before the King, her audience was a terrible disappointment. It lasted but half an hour, followed by an hour with Madame de Maintenon and a dinner with Torcy, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Not even invited to stay the night, the Princess returned to Paris the same day, depressed to think how different was this cold reception from that brilliant triumph which had greeted her at Versailles at the time of her first fall from power.

The Princess was advised to retire to Italy. But before leaving Paris, she requested and obtained one parting interview with the King. Then Louis and Madame de Maintenon received her at Marly as coldly and as briefly as before ; and there she took her last leave of the King and of his wife.

By slow stages, hoping still for some turn of fortune in her favour, and still uncertain as to the place of her retirement, Madame des Ursins made her way south. At Lyons the news of the King's death and of the Regency of the Duke of Orléans reached her. From that moment any desire she might have had to remain in France was extinguished. To Madame de Maintenon she wrote congratulating her on finding a retreat at St. Cyr ; " as for me," she added, " I know not where to go and die." Rome of all places would most naturally attract her ; but she feared the reception she might meet with from the Pope, and perhaps she hesitated to return in disgrace to a city where she had once been so powerful and so popular. So, for a while, she resided at Genoa, until, through his ambassador, Philip V., who, despite his second wife's domination, still nourished a certain kindness for his old

friend, informed her that the Pope would receive her kindly. In 1718, therefore, after seventeen years' absence, Madame des Ursins returned to Rome. It was as King Philip had promised, the Pope, and not only the Pope, but his court and his cardinals received her with all possible respect and honour. One of those cardinals was her own brother, raised some years earlier to that dignity by his sister's influence, and now, by the same means, Ambassador of France at the papal court.

The Palazzo Pasquino had some time before passed out of Madame des Ursins' possession. But the house she now occupied, although probably less pretentious, was comfortable and commodious enough for the French Ambassador, the Abbé de Tencin, to wish to live in it after her death.[1]

At Rome the Princess met another exile, James, Chevalier de St. Georges, the Old Pretender, whom a clause in the Treaty of Utrecht had banished from French dominions. She had known the Prince as a boy, and, as we have seen, been an intimate friend of his mother. The year after Madame des Ursins' arrival James married Clémentine, daughter of the famous Jean Sobieski. With the Stuart bride the Princess became intimately associated, and in the court of the exiled Stuarts she played in miniature the same part which in earlier years she had acted on a grander and a more extensive stage.

Retaining almost to the end her powers of body and of mind, she died in September, 1722, after three days' illness, during which she was visited by the Princess Sobieski. While leaving all her possessions outside Italy to her brother, the Duke of Noirmoustiers, and her Orsini property to her nephew, the Duke of Lanti, she bequeathed a gold snuff-box set with diamonds to the Pretender, and

[1] "Madame des Ursins et la Succession d'Espagne," VI., 351.

a gilded toilet-set that had once belonged to the Queen of Spain to the Princess Sobieski.

Sainte-Beuve at the end of his second *causerie* on the Princess admits that he had intended to represent Madame des Ursins as an example of the undesirable female politician. But Sainte-Beuve, like Balaam, having gone forth to curse, remained to bless. Captivated by her charms, even through the pallid medium of books, he was compelled to recognise her usefulness. And indeed with that charm which captivated Sainte-Beuve, and without which no woman politician can achieve success, Madame des Ursins was bountifully endowed. It was a charm of manner and also of appearance as the portrait illustrating this chapter must testify.

The Princess's brother, the Cardinal de La Trémoille, had two years earlier preceded her to the grave. No one could have been less ecclesiastically minded than this little hunchback Cardinal, who as a wit and a libertine was the complete type of an eighteenth century abbé. As we have seen, he owed much to his sister, with whom nevertheless he was constantly quarrelling. His household was the most disorderly in Rome, and although the beneficiary of many high ecclesiastical offices and vast church lands, he died a bankrupt.

A very different person was Madame des Ursins' elder brother, the Duke of Noirmoustiers. Notwithstanding his blindness, he was a man of wide interests and high culture, esteemed by a large circle of friends, who on matters of art or of affairs bowed to his opinion as to that of an oracle. The Duke died some years after his famous sister, at the age of eighty. His second wife lived on until 1733. And with her death this branch of the La Trémoille family became extinct.

CHAPTER X

THE PRINCESSE DE TALMOND, PRINCE CHARLIE'S EGERIA, AND OTHER LA TRÉMOILLES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

WE have now reached the period of La Trémoille decline. While with Duke Henry and Duchess Marie the house attained the apogee of its grandeur, with the Fronde and the dissipation of the family fortune by the Prince de Tarente there set in a steady diminution of wealth and of authority, which ended in the *débâcle* of the Revolution. Throughout the eighteenth century, as we have seen,[1] the Dukes, unable to keep up the double state of an establishment in the west and a hôtel at Paris, were content to abandon their country seats for the capital. The Prince de Tarente's son, Duke Charles Belgique, lived almost entirely at Paris, in a house on the Quai Malaquais, where he died in 1709.

Nothwithstanding a goodlier array of titles than had been borne by any of his ancestors,[2] Duke Charles, at once duke, prince, count, baron, viscount, marquis, peer of France and first gentleman of the bedchamber, was much less powerful than the mere Seigneurs of La Trémoille in the twelfth century. For we find him compelled through poverty to relinquish the grand state of a great feudal

[1] Preface, p. VII.

[2] Duc de La Trémoille, de Thouars and de Loudun, Prince de Tarente and de Talmond, Comte de Laval, de Montfort, de Guines, de Jonvelle and de Taillebourg, Baron de Vitré, de Mauleon, de Burie and de Didonne, Vicomte de Rennes, de Bais and de Marsillé, Marquis d'Espinay.

suzerain, living in the midst of numerous vassals, who would expect to be entertained in princely fashion after the manner of the La Trémoilles of yore.

For this woeful deplenishment of the family exchequer, the Prince de Tarente must not be held solely responsible. It had been largely drawn upon by the Prince's parents for the erection on the bank of the Thouet of their magnificent château, which, converted into a state prison, stands to-day as the expression of that pride which proverbially heralds a fall. But there was yet another event which helped to empty the La Trémoille purse, and with that neither the Duke, the Duchess nor the Prince had anything to do. Louis XVI.'s Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by driving from France the Protestant tanners of Thouars, the most industrious and the most prosperous of its inhabitants, while inflicting an irretrievable disaster on the town and the province, considerably curtailed the La Trémoille income.

Of the four Dukes of Thouars and La Trémoille from the Prince de Tarente down to the Revolution there is little to tell. Neither of them possessed any very striking personality. Three, Charles Belgique (1655—1709), Charles Louis Bretagne[1] (1685—1719), and Jean Bretagne (1737—1792), were soldiers. But Charles Belgique was compelled by ill-health to retire early from the army. Charles Louis Bretagne and Jean Bretagne were field marshals, in which capacity the former commanded at Oudenarde and Malplaquet. Both Charles Belgique and Charles Louis were first Gentlemen of the Bedchamber to Louis XIV., an office which the latter continued to hold under Louis XIV.'s successor. Charles Armand René

[1] The name of Bretagne was given to him because the Breton Estates, of which his father was President, stood as his godfather.

(1708—1741) made a new departure in the history of his line. Hitherto the La Trémoilles, had distinguished themselves rather in the sphere of action than in that of thought. But Armand René must have added to the ability of a man of action—he was a brilliant soldier—some intellectual qualifications, for we find that on March 6th, 1738, he was received as a member of the French Academy, a new honour for a La Trémoille, but one which was to be renewed in the following century; then the late Duke, by his careful arrangement and publication of the family records, won a seat among the Immortals.

Throughout the century, despite their diminished wealth, the La Trémoilles pursued their ancient policy of mating only in the noblest houses of the day. Charles Belgique married Madeleine de Créquy,[1] daughter of Charles de Créquy, Prince de Poix; Charles Louis took to wife Marie Madeleine, only daughter of René Armand Motier de La Fayette; Charles Armand René followed the example of his ancestor Duke Henry and married into the house of Bouillon, his wife Marie Hortense was the daughter of the Duke Emmanuel Théodore de La Tour d'Auvergne. Jean Bretagne was twice married: first in 1751 to Marie Geneviève de Durfort, who died without children in 1762; and afterwards to Marie Maximilienne de Salm-Kerbourg, daughter of a German Prince and Princess, who died in 1790, two years before her husband, leaving four sons.

Considering the noble zeal shown by these sons, during the Revolution period, in risking and forfeiting their lives in defence of the French monarchy, had not the Princess de Salm proved more prolific than the wives of earlier eighteenth century La Trémoilles, the line would have

[1] She died two years before her husband, 1717.

become extinct, for both Charles Louis Bretagne and his successor Charles Armand René had only one son.

It is, however, to the younger La Trémoille branch, to the wife of a Prince de Talmond, that in this century we must look for that vein of romantic adventure which never fails to enliven the history of this house.

The Prince de Tarente's second son,[1] Frédéric Guillaume, bore the title of Prince de Talmond and bequeathed it to his son, Anne Charles Frédéric. It is the story of this Prince's consort that is the subject of this chapter.

Now, but not for the first time, we shall find the destinies of La Trémoilles touching those of the house of Stuart. We have already seen Charlotte de La Trémoille entertaining her cousin, Prince Rupert, at Lathom House, the Prince de Tarente receiving the Garter from the exiled Charles II., the Princesse des Ursins staying with Mary of Modena at St. Germain, and later, in the days of her adversity, dominating the court of the elder Pretender at Rome. Now La Trémoilles and Stuarts were to be associated in a romantic connection which to neither house was to bring honour or prosperity.

[1] Henry Charles, Prince de Tarente.

Charles Belgique Hollande, Duc de La Trémoille.

Frédéric Guillaume, Prince de Talmond, 1668—1739, took orders and became Abbé of Charroux and Canon of Strasbourg, 1689; left Church for army and became Lieutenant-General in 1710; married Antoinette de Bouillon in 1707, by whom he had several children. The eldest =

Anne Charles Frédéric, Prince de Talmond, Brigadier of Cavalry, 1743; created Duke of Chatellerault, 1749; died 1759. Married, 1730, Marie Louise Jablonowski, first cousin of King Stanislas of Poland.

Louis Stanislas, Duke of Chatellerault,

MADELINE DE LA FAYETTE, DUCHESE DE LA TRÉMOILLE AND HER SON, ARMAND RENÉ, DUC DE LA TRÉMOILLE

From a picture, attributed to Jervas, belonging to Mr. Aldenburg Bentinck, photographed by Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond

The Prince de Tarente's grandson, besides being a brilliant general, was a gallant courtier, in high favour with King Louis XV. And it was at Louis' court at Chambord, in 1730, that for his sins the Prince de Talmond met and married one of the most attractive and capricious women of her time, a Polish Princess, Marie Jablonowski, first cousin to Stanislas, the exiled King of Poland, with whose daughter, Queen Marie Leczsinki, she had come to France. But more important than either of those relationships and fraught with more serious consequences was Princess Marie's cousinship to Prince Charles Edward Stuart, through his mother, Princess Sobieski.

Some years after her marriage we find the Princesse de Talmond in Paris, in the fashionable philosophical circles of that day, the friend of Montesquieu, of Voltaire and of that most brilliant of eighteenth century, *Salonnières* Madame du Deffand.

In this same circle, possibly introduced into it by his beautiful cousin, moved Prince Charles Edward during the years of defeat and despair which followed Culloden. Of the Princess, Voltaire wrote that she was endowed with

> "Le gout qu'on ne trouve qu'en France
> Et l'esprit de tous les pays." [1]

Madame du Deffand, who never indulged in undiluted praise, draws a less flattering portrait of her.

"Madame de Talmond," she writes, "has beauty and wit and vivacity; that turn for pleasantry which is our national inheritance seems natural to her. . . . But her wit deals only with pleasant frivolities; her ideas are the children of her memory rather than of her imagination. French in everything else, she is original in her vanity.

[1] Quoted by Andrew Lang, "Life of Prince Charles Edward Stuart," (1903), p. 343.

Ours is more sociable, inspires the desire to please, and suggests the means. Hers is truly Sarmatian, artless and indolent ; she cannot bring herself to flatter those whose admiration she covets. . . . She thinks herself perfect, says so, and expects to be believed. At this price alone does she yield a semblance of friendship ; semblance, I say, for her affections are concentrated on herself. She is as jealous as she is vain, and so capricious as to make her at once the most unhappy and the most absurd of women. She never knows what she wants, what she fears, whom she loves, or whom she hates. There is nothing natural in her expression ; with her chin in the air she poses eternally as tender or disdainful, absent or haughty ; all is affectation. . . . She is feared and hated by all who live in her society. Yet she has truth, courage and honesty, and is such a mixture of good and evil that no steadfast opinion about her can be entertained. She pleases, she provokes ; we love, hate, seek, and avoid her. It is as if she communicated to others the eccentricity of her own caprice."

This description, while obviously not charitable, is stamped with that keen discernment of character for which the writer was famous ; indeed, it is in perfect accord with what we know of Madame de Talmond's behaviour towards Prince Charles. To the story of their relations as told by Argenson in his " Memoirs," the late Mr. Andrew Lang, in his two volumes entitled " Pickle the Spy " and the life of " Prince Charles Edward," has added details derived chiefly from the Stuart papers at Windsor and from some Additional MSS. in the British Museum. In the course of unravelling the mysterious skein of the Prince's career during the years which followed Culloden, Mr. Lang has revealed the important part played by Madame de Talmond in this chapter of her royal cousin's life.

As the defeated hero of the great '45, the bonnie Prince naturally appealed to feminine imagination. "In Paris, the year after Culloden," writes Argenson, "women were literally pulling caps for Charles." In a manuscript play by the minister [1] he represents "Madame de Talmond and another noble lady fighting like fish-fags over the object of their admiration." But it was Madame de Talmond who, despite some ten years' seniority to the Prince, conquered in the end, and ruled her victim with fire and fury. "She was certainly his Egeria, probably his mistress," writes Mr. Lang. She, with other distinguished friends, was invited by Charles to a gorgeous supper at Paris in 1748, for which the Prince ordered a new service of plate worth 100,000 francs, and insisted on the goldsmith's preferring his order to the King's. In the opinion of the Old Pretender, Madame de Talmond, during these desperate years, was encouraging his son in every kind of folly. It was she who was held responsible for his indifference to religion, for she was accused with having infected him with her free-thinking principles. And indeed it seems probable that when in this same year Louis XV., by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, promised to expel Charles from his dominions, the Princess encouraged him to defy the French monarch and refuse to go.

At that time Charles was daily visiting Madame de Talmond in her hôtel. Her husband not unnaturally objected and complained to the King that every day the Prince entered his gardens uninvited, and walked beneath his windows. Acting on the King's advice apparently, the Prince de Talmond instructed his footmen to refuse Charles admission. Therefore, one day when the Prince

[1] Entitled "La Prison du Prince Charles Edouard Stuart." Published later by the Duc de Broglie, in "La Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique," No. 4, Paris, 1891.

arrived as usual at two o'clock in the afternoon, he was told that no one was at home. Flying into a fury, Charles declared it to be a lie. But it was perfectly true, for Madame de Talmond had gone to the Queen. She explained to her lover when they met that after all she must obey her husband, and that if even the King wished to enter her house against her husband's will, he would be refused admission. Such defiance, however, only provoked Charles further. At eleven o'clock that night he returned, and, finding all doors closed against him, declared that he would force an entrance. It was only with the greatest difficulty that his companion, Bulkeley, a brother-in-law of Marshal Berwick, and also a friend of Montesquieu, dissuaded him from so violent and undignified an enterprise.

This incident was but the first in that series of quarrels between the Prince and Madame de Talmond which continued throughout their *liaison.*

A few days later, as he was coming out of the opera, Charles was arrested and confined in the château of Vincennes. At the same time one of the Prince's servants was arrested also. Thereupon his mistress wrote curtly to Maurepas : " Sir, the King's laurels are in full flower, and the imprisonment of my lacquey cannot add to their glory. I pray you release him." Maurepas' reply to this letter was the banishment of the Princess herself ; she was bidden retire to Lorraine, where she joined her exiled cousin Stanislas. Charles, after a few days' imprisonment in the fortress of Vincennes, was conducted out of Paris, where he never appeared openly again. Probably he went for a short time to Avignon. But for the next few months his movements mystified all the ministers of Europe, who hazarded many a wild guess

as to his whereabouts. Mr. Lang, with the help of the Stuart papers at Windsor, has traced him to Lorraine, where on April 3rd, 1719, he was residing at Lunéville, in the house of Stanislas' physician, and drawing up a plan for his return to Paris.[1]

Apparently he was successful, for in June Mr. Lang finds him in the French capital. Grimm, the Paris correspondent of the Empress Catherine the Great, states that in this city he was in hiding for the next three years. More probably he merely visited it, in disguise, at frequent intervals.

It is fairly certain that during these visits his place of concealment was the famous convent of St. Joseph, in the Rue St. Dominique in the Faubourg St. Germain. Madame de Montespan, Louis XIV.'s famous mistress, had founded this convent when her reign at court was over. Attached to it were rooms in which ladies of rank might make a retreat or permanently occupy chambers. Such a suite of rooms belonged to Madame de Talmond. In another Madame du Deffand had established her famous salon, receiving, in her yellow moiré drawing-room, decorated with flame-coloured rosettes, the greatest wits of the age. Into this yellow salon, in the early hours of the evening, Madame du Deffand's romantic young companion, Mdlle. de Lespinasse, used to descend to meet a few of the choicest spirits, and furtively skim the cream of the conversation before her aged employer appeared. Here, too, lived a lady of Jacobite sympathies, Madame de Vassé. She, also, had a gifted young companion, Mdlle. Ferrand, of whom we shall hear more hereafter.

In Madame de Talmond's apartment was a small dressing-room which could be approached by a secret

[1] "Pickle the Spy," p. 71.

staircase. And here, during his fugitive visits to Paris, Charles was concealed. In this retreat, and in Madame du Deffand's rooms, he may have conferred with his supporters. Bulkeley, we know, attended that lady's famous Monday evenings, and Montesquieu, another *habitué*, had pronounced Jacobite sympathies. Charles seldom ventured out of doors, although once, in 1751, he was recognised at a masked ball at the opera house.

This was no life for an adventurous high-spirited Prince. The society of philosophers and fair females might be all very well as a recreation, but when Charles saw no one else day or night he grew morbid and cantankerous, while the weakness which was ultimately to prove his ruin began to grow upon him.

Madame de Talmond, for her part, had been ready to do anything for her bonnie Prince, when, glorified by the romance of a desperate attempt valiantly hazarded and bravely lost, he had appeared in Paris. But when the months dragged on, and her heroic Prince Charming sank into a mere hunted fugitive, she began to grow tired of him. Of this there is evidence in many of the Windsor notes: scribblings of violent wrath or of passionate affection hastily penned in reply to the remonstrances of Madame de Talmond, who is addressed as L. P. D. T., or as Madame de Bauregor (Beauregard). In one of these, with mock ceremony, Charles writes:—

"We undertake in every point to carry out the will and the arrangements of our faithful friend and ally, L. P. D. T.; and to withdraw at such hours as may please the said P., either of the day or night, from her estates, in testimony whereof we sign.—C." [1]

[1] Nous nous prometons de suivre en tout les volontés et les arrangemens de notre fidèle amie et alliée, L. P. D. T.; nous retirer aux heures

In another he complains of his lady's persistence in maintaining even in the most palpable matters that black is white, and white black, and refusing to acknowledge herself in the wrong even when she felt that she was. Such charges surely, from the beginning of time, in every lover's quarrel have been levelled by the man against the woman. And whether they arise from innate feminine perversity or from masculine inability to adopt the feminine point of view, who would venture to say?

In this same letter, written on March 28th, 1750, Charles continues in an aggrieved tone.

"If you don't wish to help me, then it is useless for me to tell you of my concerns; if you do wish to protect me, then don't make my life unhappier than it already is. If you want to part from me, then tell me so in good French or Latin." [1]

Notwithstanding their disputes, Madame de Talmond continued to influence the Prince. And it was probably by her advice that in the autumn of 1750 Charles indulged in the forlorn hope of a secret expedition to England. Before he left Paris, he committed to the Princess's care letters to be given to Louis XV. in the event of Charles's death, and a document marked, "Credentials given ye 1st September, 1750, to ye P. T." (Princesse de Talmond), asking the King to regard "Madame La P. de T. ma chere

qu'il lui conviendra à la ditte P., soit du jour, soit de nuit, soit de ses états, en joy de quoi nous signons, C." Quoted by A. Lang, "Pickle the Spy," pp. 92—93.

[1] "March 28, 1750. A Madame Bauregor,—Si vous voules me servire, il ne faut pas me soutenire toujours que Blan (blanc) est noir, dans les choses les plus palpable: et jamais Avouer que vous aves tort meme quant vous le santes. Si vous ne voules pas me servire, il est inutile que je vous parle de ce qui me regarde: si vous voules me protege, il ne faut pas me rendre La Vie plus malheureuse qu'il n'est. Si vous voules m'abandoner il faut me le dire en bon Francois ou Latin." Quoted by A. Lang (*ibid.*, p. 95).

cousine," as the Prince's representative. On the eve of starting Charles commanded from Le Brun a miniature of himself with all the Orders, which Mr. Lang suggests may have been a parting gift to Madame de Talmond.

Apparently no plans had been made for an organised rising in the Prince's support. Charles probably went over partly to see how matters stood, and partly to escape from the boredom of a tedious solitude in hiding, broken only by daily quarrels and reconciliations with Madame de Talmond.

In London, however, Charles ventured to stay but a few weeks, just time enough to become a member of the Church of England, to hold a secret conference with his supporters in Pall Mall, to inspect the defences of the Tower, to alarm a Jacobite lady by appearing unexpectedly at her party, and to drink tea with a Jacobite gentleman, whose servant detected a resemblance between his master's visitor and the busts of the Prince which were being sold in Red Lyon Square. Nevertheless, despite the lady's alarm and the servant's discernment, the English Government, searching every town in Europe for the Young Pretender, never dreamt of his being at their very doors. By the end of September he was back again in Paris.

Their short separation had rendered the lovers more congenial to one another ; and among the Stuart papers of this period are numerous tiny notes, easily concealed, and doubtless, says Mr. Lang, " passed to the lady furtively," in which Charles protests his passionate adoration.

But this billing and cooing did not last long. The Prince soon began to suspect Madame de Talmond of betraying him politically, while the Princess was ever

haunted by suspicion of another kind of treachery. Their quarrels grew more and more violent, frequently culminating in blows, until the other inmates of St. Joseph could endure such scenes no longer, and Madame de Vassé insisted on the pair leaving the convent. On the eve of starting for Lorraine, Madame de Talmond wrote to Charles doubtfully: "If you are to me that which you ought to be, then I embrace you tenderly."

Her suspicions increased when she found that Charles was corresponding with another fair resident at St. Joseph, with the highly gifted and philosophical Mdlle. Ferrand.[1] To this learned lady the Prince, always a voracious reader, used to write asking for all manner of books, from works on philosophy to the popular novels of the day: "Clarissa Harlowe," "Joseph Andrews," and "Tom Jones," in French as well as English. But not only with his literary commissions did the Prince charge his erudite correspondent: she was requested to procure for him such homely articles as a razor-case with four razors, a shaving-mirror, and a strong pocket-book with a lock. There is no reason to believe, however, that Mdlle. Ferrand in her short life—for she died when quite young, in 1752—ever became more than a friend to the Prince, although Madame de Talmond persuaded herself of the contrary. And it was chiefly the Princess's jealousy of Mdlle. Ferrand that caused her to leave the Prince late in 1750. After this rupture, in Charles's letters to Mdlle. Ferrand, the once adored cousin figures as "*la vieille tante*" or "*la vieille femme.*" And matters were not improved when the Prince's correspondent showed one of these letters to the lady in question. But such indiscretions were

[1] Mr. Lang in "Pickle the Spy" claims to have identified her with a Mdlle. Luci of Charles's correspondence.

necessarily rare, for the ladies, as may be imagined, were not often on speaking terms. Their intercourse was generally carried on in a series of dignified notes, many of which, copied in the Prince's own handwriting, are preserved among the Stuart papers.

The "last words" between Charles and Madame de Talmond were exchanged in the summer of 1751. Mdlle. Ferrand died in the autumn of the following year. By that time Charles had returned to his former mistress, Miss Walkinshaw.

As far as can be ascertained, Charles and the Princess never met again. Years afterwards, in 1765, Madame de Talmond was in Rome. And then Cardinal York wrote to his brother :—

"She (the Princess) always speaks of your Royal Highness with the greatest regard and respect, and really seems to be sincerely attached to you. She complains that she never can hear of you, and thinks she deserves a share in your remembrance."

The Princess had then been six years a widow. Her much-tried husband before his death had persuaded her to renounce her philosophical opinions and return to the Catholic Church. She was now extremely devout.

In the following year she was at Paris occupying "charitable apartments" in the Luxembourg. And it was there that Horace Walpole visited her.

With the affectation of a man of the world, Walpole, writing to his friend Gray, would have him believe that it was something of a bore to be obliged to visit this middle-aged Princess. But in reality he must have been curious to see the fair shrew about whose quarrels with her princely lover he must frequently have heard from

his "old blind one," as he called his friend Madame du Deffand.

"I have been sent for about like an African prince or a learned canary-bird," he writes, "and was, in particular, carried by force to the Princess of Talmond, the Queen's cousin, who lives in a charitable apartment in the Luxembourg, and was sitting on a small bed hung with saints and Sobieskis, in a corner of one of those vast chambers,[1] lit by two blinking tapers."

When after stumbling over a dog, a cat, a footstool, and other things, Walpole reached her presence, she had not a syllable to say to him. But the spirit of earlier days, when for her men had existed only to receive her commands, soon returned, and before her visitor left she had so far recovered her conversational powers as to beg him to send her a lap-dog.

Not long afterwards, Walpole, writing to George Montagu, relates how one morning the Princess sent him a picture of two pug dogs and a black and white greyhound wretchedly painted. At first Walpole could not conceive what he was to do with "this daub," but in an accompanying note the Princess warned him not to hope to keep it. It was only to imprint on his memory the size and features and spots of "Diana," her departed greyhound, in order that he might get her exactly such another. "Don't you think my memory will return well stored," asked the cavalier, "if it is littered with defunct lap-dogs? She is so devout that I did not dare send her word that I am not possessed of a twig of Jacob's broom, with which he streaked cattle as he pleased."

This for some time appeared to be our last glimpse of

[1] Horace Walpole, "Letters," ed. Cunningham, IV., 472, 490; and "Lettres de la Marquise du Deffand à Horace Walpole," ed. Paget Toynbee, 1912, II., 565, note.

the Princesse de Talmond. But in the recently published letters of Madame du Deffand to Horace Walpole [1] we find that brilliant and malicious lady giving an inimitable description of the Princess's death-bed scene.

In a letter dated December 29th, 1773, Madame du Deffand writes :—

" I may tell you that this letter will not be long. For the news I have to announce is not sufficiently interesting to require me to sacrifice my hope of sleep. That hope will be vain perhaps. I have long lost the habit of sleeping. But Madame de Talmond has lost the habit of living. So she has surpassed me. She died on the 25th of this month like a veritable heroine of romance.

" On the eve of her death she had her doctors, her confessor and her steward round her bed. To her doctors she said : ' Gentlemen, you have killed me, but it was according to your rules and your principles ;' to her confessor : ' You have done your duty by inspiring me with great terror ' ; to her steward : ' You are here at the request of my servants, who wish me to make my will. You are all playing your parts well, but you will agree that I also am not playing mine badly.'

" Then she confessed, received the Communion, and added a codicil to her will which she had made some time before. Madame Adélaide [2] she created her sole legatee. Her jewels she bequeathed to Madame Adélaide and her sisters,[3] her watch and her porcelain to M. de Maurepas, and small legacies to old friends with whom she had quarrelled, and who had figured in her former will which she had not revoked. For her burial," concluded Madame du Deffand, " the Princess had prepared a gown of blue and silver and a beautiful lace cap ; but the Archbishop, disapproving of such display, commanded that gown and cap should be sold for the benefit of the poor."

[1] Ed. *cit.*, 1912, II., 564—565.
[2] Louis XV.'s eldest daughter.
[3] *A toutes mesdames.*

CHAPTER XI

THE FAMILY DURING THE REVOLUTION. 1764—1839.

ONE can hardly imagine irony more grim than that with which, on the verge of the Revolution, the pastoral pictures of the French nobility represent France as a land where it is always afternoon. In these pictures, the inhabitants of France seem to have no other care than to play at being peasants and peasantesses, and to follow the example set by their fascinating Queen, who, in white cambric frock, straw hat and muslin fichu, superintends the milking of cows in her *hameau* at Versailles.

Then, as now, the simple life was all the fashion. To the rumbling thunder of the Revolution these fine folk in their mock simplicity turned a deaf ear. If ever an echo of its rolling broke in upon their complacence they drowned it by tuning up their violins for villagers to dance to.

Such thoughts are suggested by an interesting La Trémoille group which represents the Ducal family some ten years before the outbreak of the Revolution.[1] Here the Duke and Duchess, Jean Bretagne[2] and Marie de Salm, seated upon a rock, in a garden, with a rivulet flowing at their feet, are surrounded by their four sons, boys of some ten or twelve summers, all busily engaged in various rural pursuits.

[1] Reproduced in "Souvenirs de la Révolution," published by Duke Louis Charles, 1901.

[2] 1737—1792.

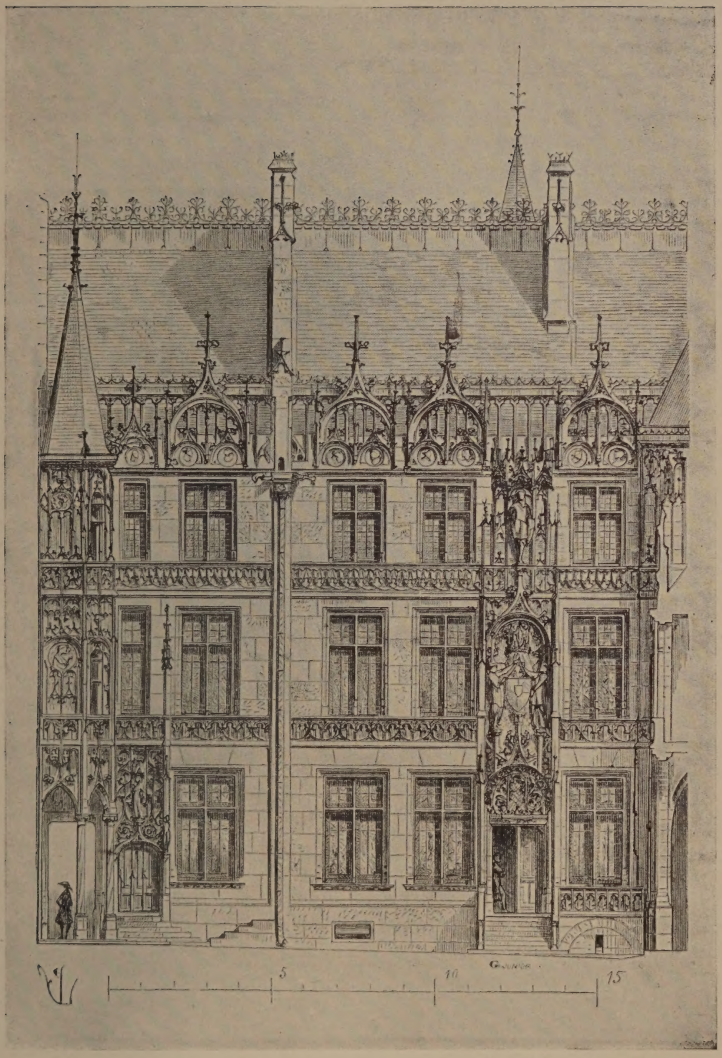
The Prince Talmond,[1] who was to die a brave death in La Vendée, is placidly watering plants; while his twin brother, Charles Auguste,[2] whose own head was to fall beneath the guillotine, here, armed with garden shears, is apparently intent on himself decapitating innocent flowers. The other two brothers, eldest and youngest of the family, the Prince de Tarente [3] and the Prince de La Trémoille,[4] both destined to wander through Europe serving in foreign armies against their *Sans-culottes* countrymen, now, equipped one with gun the other with fishing rod, figure as the sportsmen of this family picture.

Real country life played no part in the upbringing of these four brothers. The La Trémoilles had long ago forsaken their country castles for residence in Paris. There Duke Jean occupied a hôtel in the Palais Royal, which was then the most fashionable quarter.

With the shifting of the centre of fashion from the left to the right bank of the Seine, the La Trémoilles had abandoned their beautiful mansion,[5] one of the finest gems of fifteenth century architecture, which the great Louis de La Trémoille had, in 1490, built near the Luxembourg.

Then, as now, however, the intellectual centre continued on the left bank, and it was at the college of Plessis, incorporated by Cardinal Richelieu's will with the Sorbonne, that Duke Jean's sons were educated. After a

[1] Antoine Philippe de La Trémoille, 1765—1794.
[2] He became Dean of Strasbourg, and was executed in June, 1794.
[3] Charles Bretagne, later Duc de La Trémoille, 1764—1839.
[4] Louis Stanislas Kotzka, 1768—1837.
[5] See Viollet-le-Duc, "Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'Architecture Francaise," 1858—1868, VI., 282—284. Its chief entrance was in the Rue des Bourdonnais, but its garden extended to the Rue Tirechappe. In 1840 the hotel was still standing. Then Viollet-le-Duc, in collaboration with the Commissioners of Historical Monuments, endeavoured in vain to save it from destruction. All he could do was to procure the preservation in the Musée des Beaux Arts of a few of its fragments.



FAÇADE OF THE HÔTEL DE LA TRÉMOILLE AT PARIS

few years at college three of the princes, Charles Bretagne, Antoine Philippe and Louis Stanislas, entered the army. Charles Auguste took orders and became eventually Dean of Strasbourg.

The eldest son, Charles, Prince de Tarente, was married young, when a mere boy, at the age of sixteen, to a great heiress, Emmannuelle, the Duchesse de Châtillon's second daughter, who was a year and a half her husband's senior. In the Prince's extremely frank Recollections,[1] written after the turmoil of the Revolution had subsided, he admits that at the time of their marriage, his bride's only attraction was her expectation of an income of 200,000 francs. For, as a girl of seventeen, Emmannuelle, who was later to develop into a handsome woman, was nothing but a shy gawky miss. From so unalluring a wife, Emmannuelle's boy bridegroom did not grieve to find himself compelled to part immediately after the nuptial ceremony by a summons to join his regiment in Normandy.

Their military duties left the La Trémoille princes ample time for the pursuit of pleasure, which they eagerly followed, not along those rural paths which their family portrait might suggest, but amidst the gaieties and dissipations of towns and watering-places, where the playthings they most affected were not garden shears or watering-pots or pruning hooks so much as race-horses, cards and the wiles of fair women.

Brave soldiers they all were, but voluptuaries too. The Prince de Tarente in his Recollections does not hesitate to confess as much. There he admits that at nineteen he lost a fortune in one bout of card-playing which lasted twenty-four continuous hours, and that to pay his

[1] Published by his son, Duke Louis Charles, in "Les La Trémoilles pendant cinq. Siècles," Vol. V. Passages from them also the Duke has included in "Les Souvenirs de La Princesse de Tarente."

gambling debts his mother persuaded the Duke, his father, to mortgage lands near Thouars.

After this disaster the Prince de Tarente vowed to abjure cards, and to the letter of his resolution he vigorously adhered for the rest of his days. But other games of chance as well as *amours*, horse-racing, and at least two duels contributed to his adventurous career an equal excitement.

This gay life, doubtless the typical existence of many a young French noble of that time, the Prince frankly describes in his Souvenirs :—

" For two summers," he writes, " I visited the Spa of Plombières, where I ran my horses against the English, among others the Duke of Bedford.[1] My losses were about equal to my gains. But the dash I was cutting attracted the attention of a lady, who was then the rage, rather for her wit than her beauty, for her face was merely fresh and animated. With my philosophical (*sic*) ideas as to the fairness of women I should have preferred a pretty, fresh *grisette* to a princess devoid of those real attractions ; so I began by chaffing the assiduous courtiers of this queen of fashion. She, piqued by my behaviour, swore to attach me to her train. She succeeded. Nevertheless I remained heart-whole, and my flattered pride was the only tie which for four or five years bound me to her."

The Prince de Tarente was the most dissipated of the three brothers. But Antoine, the La Vendée hero, was almost as much addicted to pleasure. At twenty-five he was already afflicted with the family's tendency to corpulence, and with so much more than a tendency to the family gout that at times during the La Vendée campaigns

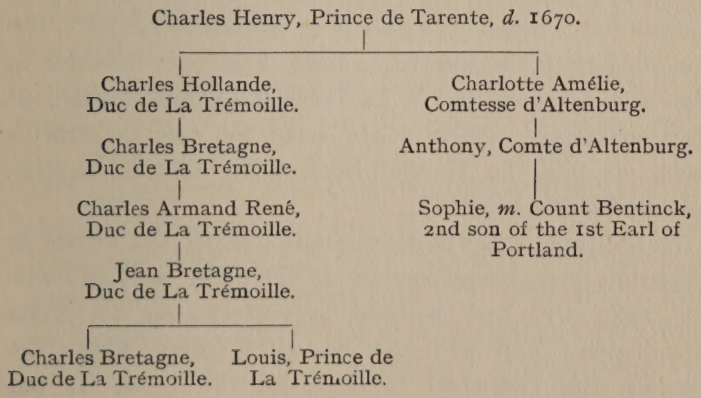
[1] This was Fox's famous friend, and Burke's *bête noir*, ruthlessly satirised in the " Anti-Jacobin."

he was disabled from going into action. This weakness, however, did not prevent him from playing a heroic part during the La Vendée struggle. Yet war did not absorb him so deeply but that he found time during its progress for more than one amorous intrigue.

Prince Louis de La Trémoille, the youngest of the three brothers, served the royal cause as a soldier in La Vendée and as a diplomat at various European courts. Yet he, too, was capable of controlling his royalist ardour in order for a while to pursue his own interest. For some years during the Revolution period he became a fortune-hunter, and we shall find him dancing attendance on his aged kinswoman Sophie, Countess Bentinck,[1] in the vain hope that she would make him her heir.

It was probably soon after the famous Quatorze Juillet that Duke Jean and his Duchess committed what the Republicans described as "the crime of emigration," and sought refuge in Savoy, turning their backs upon a land which, in their opinion, hordes of barbarians were striving

[1] Table showing the relationship of Sophie, Countess Bentinck, to the La Trémoilles:—


Charles Henry, Prince de Tarente, d. 1670.
Charles Hollande, Duc de La Trémoille.
Charlotte Amélie, Comtesse d'Altenburg.
Charles Bretagne, Duc de La Trémoille.
Anthony, Comte d'Altenburg.
Charles Armand René, Duc de La Trémoille.
Sophie, m. Count Bentinck, 2nd son of the 1st Earl of Portland.
Jean Bretagne, Duc de La Trémoille.
Charles Bretagne, Duc de La Trémoille.
Louis, Prince de La Trémoille.

to convert "into a savage country peopled by a few tribes of cannibals." But the La Trémoilles had a further inducement for their flight, in the fact that the Duchess was suffering from consumption, of which she died at Nice in 1790.

Round their beloved mother's death-bed gathered her four sons, coming, three of them from France, and the eldest, Charles Bretagne, from Turin, which was then the headquarters of the royal princes. After the funeral of the Duchess, leaving their father with his youngest son in Savoy, where two years later, in May, 1792, the Duke died at Chambèry, the La Trémoille brothers dispersed, never, all four of them, to meet again. Two, as we have seen, were to perish during the Revolution; two, after many adventures in various countries of Europe, returned with ruined fortunes and disappointed hopes, to settle in their native land.

A few months after Duke Jean's death, the Revolution Government, seized the La Trémoille estates, by virtue of two laws passed by the Legislative Assembly decreeing the confiscation of emigrants' property. In vain did the family represent that Duke Jean was not an *emigré*, having left France on account of his wife's health; the Revolutionaries continued to hold those vast domains in the west, accumulated in La Trémoille hands throughout five centuries. Seven years later by the Directory's order we find the Thouars lands being sold by auction for the State's benefit.

At the time of her mother-in-law's death, the Prince de Tarente's wife, Emmannuelle de Châtillon, was in Paris. In 1785 she had become lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette; and with the beautiful Queen whom she adored, she remained through all the crises of the

Revolution until that fatal day when *l'Autrichienne* was imprisoned in the Temple.

So, while her husband had been flaunting fashion at race-courses and spas, the Princesse de Tarente had remained in the heart of things at Paris. She had now grown into a beautiful, clever woman. And La Trémoille in describing his dissipations at Plombières boasts of his conjugal fidelity :—

"All this while," he writes, "I did not neglect my wife. Her only failing was that she did not bear me children. However, in the winter of 1788—9, she gave birth to a daughter, whom we called Caroline. I learnt her death in the beginning of 1791, at Turin, that earliest nest of the emigrants, where I had joined the Comte d'Artois."

Emmannuelle de Châtillon can never have laboured under any illusion with regard to her husband. From her wedding day, when he left her at the church door, until the end of her life, she seems to have regarded him as a wayward child. Her affection for the Queen was her great passion; and when the Prince de Tarente wrote asking his wife to join him abroad, she refused to forsake her mistress.

The Princess as well as her husband has left us her recollections. In the thrilling pages of this, one of the most interesting of Revolution records, the writer, with graphic pen, describes the most stirring events of those stirring times, from the terrible October days when the Baker, the Baker's wife and the Baker's boy were brought by a howling mob from Versailles to Paris, all through the confinement of that Baker's family in the Tuileries, until the fatal morning of August 10th, 1792,

when they walked into the lion's mouth and took refuge with the Assembly.

From a window in the Palace, on that sad morning, the Princess watched her beloved Queen, with her husband, children and sister-in-law, walk across the gardens to the Monastery of the Feuillants, there to throw themselves on the mercy of the Convention. Madame de Tarente then little thought that she was gazing on her adored sovereign for the last time: she expected the royal family to return in an hour or so. But very soon after their departure the sound of firing was heard, and the noise of the mob breaking into the Palace. The Princess with other ladies of the Queen's suite locked themselves in one of the royal apartments. There, like persons frightened by a thunderstorm, they drew down the blinds, closed the shutters and lit all the candles, hoping thus to shut out the hideous yells of the mob, the noise of firing, and the sight of the grim scenes which were being enacted in the Palace gardens. But the infuriated horde soon broke through all the bolts and bars which these defenceless women had erected against them. In the midst of the panic and confusion which ensued one of the invaders, his dark heart illuminated by a flash of pity, cried, "don't hurt the women." Madame de Tarente immediately seized her opportunity, and entreating mercy, obtained protection for herself, for a young girl who had been committed to her charge, and for an elderly lady. Their deliverer, conducting them through the desolated Palace, past the dead bodies of the King's retainers, brought them out by a side door on to the quay near the Pont Royal. There he left them to contend alone with new adventures. Making their way along the lower path by the riverside, the fugitives attracted the attention of loiterers on the

opposite bank: they were fired upon and then seized by a group of Revolutionaries. Dragged in the broiling August sun across the Place Louis Quinze,[1] these unhappy women were taken to a committee of the Section sitting in the Rue Neuve-des-Capucins. There, in a member of the committee they were fortunate in finding a protector. Dismissing the angry mob with the promise that the captives should be brought to justice, he welcomed the ladies kindly and, after their pursuers had dispersed, sent them well guarded to the house of Madame de Tarente's grandmother, the Duchesse de la Vallière.

In her grandmother's house for some days the Princess remained in concealment, longing to join her Queen in the Temple prison, and filled with envy when the young companion of her escape, Pauline de Tourzel, was summoned to her Sovereign's side.

It was not the Temple but the Abbaye prison that awaited Madame de Tarente. Her hiding place was discovered, and to the Abbaye, after trial by one of the Revolution committees, she was taken on August 27th. Her entrance into that grim abode she has vividly described in her Recollections. Dragged through what appeared like a narrow slit in the wall, as the prison door banged behind her, its noise resounded to the depths of her heart.

"At the sound of the shooting of the bolts," she writes, "I felt myself cut off from the whole world. It was ten o'clock in the evening. A horrible smell of gin made me feel sick. With morbid curiosity I gazed around me, but could see nothing."

For eight days Madame de Tarente remained in the Abbaye. On September 2nd began the terrible prison

[1] Now Place de la Concorde.

massacres. All the hideous scenes of those two black days and nights the Princess paints in striking colours. She herself only narrowly escaped sharing the horrible fate of the Princesse de Lamballe. By a marvellous piece of good fortune, Madame de Tarente's sufferings had from the first inspired pity in the heart of a certain M. Chancey, a member of the committee which had tried her. Now for the second time she owed her deliverance to a Revolutionary. And it was through M. Chancey's efforts, seconded by what can only be described as wonderful good luck, that the Princess escaped with her life.

Into the gory hands of the murderous mob pressing round the prison gates like hungry beasts of prey, Madame de Tarente was delivered, not as a victim to be slaughtered, but as a captive wrongly accused, whose innocence had now been established. "A triumph for Madame," cried her saviour. Two hundred voices echoed, "A triumph for Madame." And almost fainting, but clutching tightly in her hand the dirty, crumpled, mud-bespattered scrap of paper, which was the charter of her liberty, the Princess was raised shoulder high and carried through the crowd, who as warmly applauded her escape as but a few moments before they had welcomed the dying groans of their victims. Entering a carriage waiting at the end of the street, Madame de Tarente was driven to the house of her mother, the Duchesse de Châtillon, in the Rue du Bac.

But there the Queen's *ci-devant* lady-in-waiting was by no means safe from Republican hatred; and so, yielding to her friends' entreaties, she consented to emigrate. At six o'clock in the morning, on September 13th, accompanied by her brother-in-law, Antoine Philippe, Prince de Talmond, she passed through the garden gate of the Duchess's house and walked down to the Pont Royal,

MARIE ANTOINETTE AFTER THE KING'S DEATH

From a portrait drawn in the Temple and presented to the Princesse de Tarente

where she entered a cab, a curious kind of a vehicle, so it seemed to her, for an aristocrat to drive in. By this plebeian mode of conveyance she reached Amiens. Thence the *bourgeois* cab returned to Paris, while its occupants in a phaeton continued their way as far as Boulogne.

There, having been warned that Revolutionary agents were observing their movements, it was deemed dangerous to wait for the packet which should start for England on the morrow. So, at midnight, crouching in the hold of a dirty little boat, to which she had been carried by a still dirtier sailor, Madame de Tarente watched the dark blue sky, the glittering stars and the receding shores of France.

The land of her birth she was never to see again, except once, years later, when for a brief space, before starting for a distant land, she returned to visit her little daughter's grave.

In this hazardous voyage the Princess was still accompanied by her faithful brother-in-law, Talmond, who but a few months later was to give his life for the King in La Vendée. This was Talmond's second visit to England that year. During the Revolution period the La Trémoille brothers were constantly crossing the Channel to visit their friends among the English aristocracy, and to solicit aid from the English Government for the royal cause in France.

Among the La Trémoilles' friends in England was the Marquis of Queensberry, the famous "old Q." He now placed at the Princess's disposal his beautiful villa at Richmond, where, during her five years' residence [1] in England, Madame de Tarente dwelt, in company with

[1] 1792—1797.

that fair lady of disputed parentage, Maria Fagniani afterwards Countess of Yarmouth.[1]

It was at Richmond that the Princess wrote her Recollections. And it was there that she was rejoined by her husband. The Prince de Tarente, or Duc de La Trémoille,[2] as he now by courtesy might be called, his father having died in this year, was then living with other French nobles in a house at Bedford. After a series of disasters resulting from what he has himself described as "his natural frivolity and thoughtlessness," his estate had been considerably reduced, and, when his wife arrived in England, the Duke was in great financial embarrassment.

The story of his life since his mother's death in 1790 is the record of constant wanderings through Europe in search of pleasure, or in the performance of some diplomatic mission—driving in a cabriolet from Turin to Rome, and from Rome to Mantua, riding post-haste, almost incessantly, so he says, for four days and five nights from Mantua to Nice. Then there followed a gay winter in London, where the Prince of Wales regarded him as a leader of fashion, admiring his shoe-buckles and borrowing his valet. In the spring, in the midst of a ball, where he was "dancing with a fair one who was by no means deaf to his gallant propositions," the news of the French Republic's declaration of war summoned him back to the Continent.

Joining the Comte d'Artois, to whom he became aide-de-camp, La Trémoille soon found himself at Coblentz, where he was bored to death by the constant bickerings of the royalist leaders, and by the seriousness of the *emigré* women.

[1] Both "Q." and George Selwyn claimed to be her father.

[2] All titles of nobility had been abolished by the National Assembly in the early days of the Revolution.

"The ladies here freeze me," he wrote to the Duchesse de Piennes in England. " For the five days I have been here I have not been able to say a single word to them . . . I can't endure women who want to direct empires and who think of anything save their own and others' pleasure."

Over the campaign of 1792 the Prince in his Recollections passes lightly, forbearing to mention that at his own expense he raised and equipped a company of hussars.

At the close of the campaign, when the army went into winter quarters, he obtained permission to go to Vienna, where he hoped to obtain an imperial fief to compensate for his lost French estates.

The gaieties of his life in London during the previous winter and of a visit to the waters of Spa in the spring, combined with the expenses of the war, had drained his purse. And in order to recover his fortunes, La Trémoille listened readily to an adventurer, one Comte Armand, whom he met on the road to Vienna, and who boasted that he was possessed of an infallible tip for winning huge sums at *rouge et noir*. Count Armand attached himself to the Duke, and soon became his evil genius. It was at the Count's suggestion that, in order to obtain money for his hazardous play, La Trémoille borrowed from the confiding Duc de Richelieu, then at Vienna, a valuable family heirloom, in the shape of a sword set with diamonds. The only bankers likely to offer an adequate sum on the security of the sword were to be found in London. Consequently La Trémoille, with his sword and his bad angel, without waiting for the Emperor's reply to his request, set out to drive across Europe.

It was late autumn ; the weather was abominable, and the roads worse ; moreover, in order to avoid falling in with the Republican army, the Duke and his companion

were compelled to follow circuitous routes and by-ways, on one of which their carriage was overturned. In the end, however, they reached Ostend in safety, and there embarked for London. At the Court of St. James's, La Trémoille received a hearty welcome. With the money raised on the sword he was able to buy horses and set up a large establishment. The Prince of Wales carried him off to Basingstoke; the Duke of Bedford, with whom we found him consorting at Plombières, invited him to hunt at Woburn Abbey. Armand meanwhile was left in London to stake what remained of the borrowed capital at *rouge et noir*.

In such gay society, while his wife was in the Abbaye prison, and his Sovereign was being tried for his life, the Duke passed the autumn and winter of 1792—3.

"Our amusements," he writes, "were hardly decorous, for with the Prince of Wales the order of the day was to drink without ceasing, so that when bedtime came I could not stand upon my legs."

From such conviviality in the country La Trémoille was summoned back to London by the news that Count Armand's infallible tip had failed, that luck was turning against him, and that the money raised on the sword was vanishing rapidly. The Duke returned to London to find himself once again reduced to poverty. He sold up his establishment, which, he writes, had become a refuge for French adventurers of both sexes, "a veritable den of thieves," and went down to Bedford to join his friends, the Duke and Duchess of Piennes. Thence he went over to Richmond to visit his wife.

The meeting between the Duke and Duchess can hardly have been a very pleasant one. While Madame de Tarente had been loyally serving her King and Queen,

enduring imprisonment and risking death for their sakes, her husband had been absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure. Madame de Tarente was scandalised by his follies; but while reproaching him bitterly, she generously placed her fortune at his disposal. His wife's financial help, however, the Prince refused; "she needed all her resources for herself," he writes.

Soon afterwards came the news of the execution of Louis XVI., which was followed by England's declaration of war against the French Republic. For service in this war several new cavalry regiments were raised; and over one of them La Trémoille would have received the command, had it not been for what the Duke himself describes as his own stupid blunder. It happened in the following manner. As he was passing by Mrs. Fitzherbert's house in London, the Prince of Wales came to the window and called out: "My dear Prince, I have some good news for you; I appoint you colonel of a regiment of light cavalry we are about to raise; you are to enter our service." To this announcement La Trémoille answered: "I am truly sensible of the amiability of your Royal Highness, but, having taken service with Monseigneur, le Prince de Condé, I cannot accept your Highness's offer without his permission." No sooner were the words out of his mouth than La Trémoille realised their awkwardness; for the Prince turned pale with anger and said: "If that is so, then consider my proposal as if it had never been made, and I wish you good luck."

From that day all relations between the Duke and the Prince of Wales ceased. For La Trémoille's character this breach with his royal friend was by no means disastrous, for it converted him from a mere pleasure-

seeking man of fashion into an energetic, courageous soldier, fighting with loyalty and devotion in his Sovereign's cause.

Immediately after his quarrel with the Prince La Trémoille left England for the Continent. But, although he had thus thoughtlessly represented himself as engaged to the Prince de Condé, he knew full well that in Condé's army he would not be likely to find employment. For the royalist princes, especially the Comte d'Artois, could not forgive him for forsaking them and going to England after the campaign of 1792.

Nevertheless, disembarking at Ostend, the Duke, accompanied by his brother, Prince Louis, proceeded to join Condé's army on the Rhine. On the way he passed through Brussels, where he borrowed money from his mother's relatives on the security of her estate. But on his arrival at Bingen, then the headquarters of the *emigrés*, La Trémoille found himself regarded as a deserter because of his winter spent in England.

He, therefore, resolved to return to Vienna and investigate the progress made by his demand for an imperial fief which the Emperor had referred to the Aulic Council. At Vienna he found that the Council, before granting his request, would require the production of a capital sum which far exceeded his means.

The next chapter of his adventures may best be related in the Duke's own words.

"I became intimate," he writes, "with the amiable Marquis del Gallo, Neapolitan ambassador at the court of Vienna, who offered me the rank of colonel aide-de-camp to his sovereign with a salary of 8,000 to 10,000 francs. I accepted, forgetting that I was thus tacitly renouncing my family's claim to the kingdom of Naples. The

recognition of my title, Prince of Taranto,[1] was refused and I was treated as a grandee of Spain. True I was addressed as Excellency, but then German princelets were called your Highness, while I was only *Signor Principe* like the grandson of any fishmonger rich enough to buy the title."

Having accepted Gallo's offer, La Trémoille apparently went to Naples. For he goes on to relate his dealings with the famous Englishman who was at that time governing the Neapolitan kingdom.

"In my first interview with General Acton,[2] the favourite minister of Queen Caroline and more powerful than King Ferdinand," he writes, "I realised that in order to please him I must become the chief of his *sbirri*, see everything, hear everything, then report everything. If I would consent, then I should be colonel of a Macedonian (or an Albanian) regiment in garrison at Naples, a horde of scoundrels always hatching revolutionary plots which had to be discovered. But I had no wish to serve as chief of police to this hard-featured, tyrannical-looking, atrabilious satrap. After dinner I gave him to understand that the Marquis del Gallo had spoken to me of the rank of a colonel aide-de-camp to the King, with the command of an auxiliary corps in Lombardy. The next day the King and Queen most graciously received me. Two days later I had my commission and set out for Lombardy, there to join five cavalry regiments, commanded by Cuto. This old general

[1] Henceforth until its formal recognition by Louis XVIII. in 1819, the title "Prince of Taranto" seems to have been in abeyance. After Wagram, Napoleon created General Macdonald Duke of Taranto.

[2] Sir John Acton (1736—1811), son of a London goldsmith and a French lady of Besançon, where Acton was born. Having entered the Tuscan navy, Acton so distinguished himself in that service that he was entrusted with the organisation of the Neapolitan naval forces. He then became Commander-in-Chief of the Neapolitan army and Prime Minister. He detested the French, and his influence over Queen Caroline, whose lover he is said to have been, was disastrous for the kingdom of Naples.

treated me with the coldest and most casual politeness. He wrongly regarded me as General Acton's spy, and seemed determined to prove me as useless as the fifth wheel of a cart. He gave me nothing to do and every day when I asked him for orders, he would reply : " Nothing at all ; *niente a fatto.*" I sat at his table with his two aides-de-camp ; but it was far from good, for he was a veritable skinflint."

To his great relief, after a short time with this old curmudgeon, La Trémoille was ordered to join Radetzky, chief staff officer and aide-de-camp to Beaulieu, who in 1796 was appointed commander-in-chief of the Austrian army in North Italy. In Radetzky's service there was no lack of employment. La Trémoille's knowledge of German and Italian rendered him invaluable as correspondent of the army, while his quickness of perception and the alertness of movement he had cultivated in the hunting field enabled him to do first-rate work as a scout.

In that memorable retreat of Beaulieu's forces pursued by Buonaparte across the plain of Lombardy, La Trémoille commanded in the rearguard. He was present at the Battle of Lodi. That action, though it lasted but twenty minutes, involved, writes the Duke, the most terrible slaughter he had ever seen.

During the following day and two nights Radetzky kept La Trémoille busy reconnoitring. For the whole of the day after Lodi, from four o'clock in the morning until darkness fell, he had not a moment in which to take food.

" On the second night," he writes, " Radetzky entrusted me with the delicate and difficult task of reconnoitring along the Adigio and of distinguishing between our friends and our foes. . . . The troops were so close together that in the darkness it was difficult to tell whether the fires in

the bivouacs belonged to the French or to the Austrians. We were surrounded by them. One attracted my attention. It was a little off the road leading up to the Gambarani Bridge. This was no joke, and it was imperative to discover to which side it belonged. I had only taken my orderly with me. Him I left to look after my horse. Then, crawling on my stomach, noiselessly through the vines, I came to within fifteen feet of a French bivouac fire. They had two or three wounded with them. They were swearing and cursing the Austrians, whom they said they would like to throw into the Adigio. And in truth they were on the point of doing it. Yet we were still in a position to cross the river."

Then the Duke relates how this passage was effected in the darkness, how the wheels of carts and gun-carriages were bound round with straw, and how, thanks to German taciturnity, a column of 9,000 to 10,000 men with all their artillery and baggage wagons passed 300 paces from the enemy's main body without being heard.

La Trémoille was uncertain whether, during this campaign, he ever actually saw Buonaparte. There was a general on horseback on the Bridge at Lodi who may have been he. But he was enveloped in smoke, and the Prince, from portraits he saw afterwards, thought it more likely to have been Augereau.

The crossing of the Adigio closed the campaign of 1796. His Neapolitan cavalry, under the command of a brave Spaniard, Marshal Ruitz, La Trémoille sent into winter quarters in the Tyrol, while he himself visited Lausanne, Turin and Venice. Count Radetzky, highly pleased with his services, had mentioned him in the most flattering manner in the reports he had sent to Vienna.

It was about this time that the Duchesse de La Trémoille, whom her husband had left in England, was

invited by the Czar and Czarina to become lady-in-waiting at the court of St. Petersburg.

Paul I. and his wife, Maria Feodorovna, before their accession to the throne of all the Russias, had visited Paris *incognito* as the Comte and Comtesse du Nord. And there at the house of her grandmother, the Duchesse de la Vallière, Madame de Tarente had made their acquaintance. She now accepted their invitation, and set sail for Cronstadt on board a Russian frigate which they had sent for her. In Russia, suffering much, as long as he lived, from the vagaries of the eccentric Czar Paul,[1] the Duchess continued to reside until her death in 1814. That her husband did not join her there was not his fault; for from his wife's correspondence [2] we learn that he more than once proposed coming to St. Petersburg. But after his unfortunate experience in England no doubt the Duchess dreaded for him an idle life of pleasure among the French *emigrés* who had thronged to the Russian capital. And she was doubtless right. For the Duke's voluptuousness and frivolity must there have led him into follies as wild as those he had committed in England and elsewhere. It was also more in accordance with the traditions of his house that he should remain in Italy fighting against the enemies of his King.

Unhappily, however, through the campaign of 1797, as the result of a disagreement between Austria and Naples, there was nothing for La Trémoille to do but vegetate at Naples. This he detested. Naples did not possess the attractions of London or Vienna. Moreover, he was surrounded by enemies, for Queen Caroline, Sir John

[1] Fortunately he died in 1801. For an interesting account of his reign, see K. Waliszewski, "Le Fils de la Grande Catherine" (1912).

[2] Published with her "Souvenirs" by Duke Louis Charles de La Trémoille.

EMMANUELLE DE CHÂTILLON, PRINCESSE DE TARENTE
AND DUCHESSE DE LA TRÉMOILLE

Acton and the notorious Lady Hamilton, who was then very powerful at Naples, all disliked the French. The Neapolitan officers, too, were jealous of this French Duke, and accused him of treachery in the previous campaign.

The King, however, remained his friend; and in the following year La Trémoille received a command in General Mack's army, first under the Prince of Hesse Philipstal, whom he disliked for having worsted him in love, and then under a personal friend, the Chevalier de Saxe. In the neighbourhood of Rome there was a good deal of fighting with the French. At Civita Castellana, Saxe received a bullet in the stomach, whereupon his troops, crying "the general is dead," turned and fled in disorder. There was a general rout, and the soldiers fired upon their officers when they attempted to rally them.

In the place of Saxe, who was unable to travel, La Trémoille was summoned to Rome to report on this disaster to Acton and King Ferdinand. The Duke himself was suffering from an attack of fever and was almost delirious. Although the King and his minister received him kindly, La Trémoille a few days later read in the newspaper that he was accused of treason and held responsible for the rout at Civita Castellana. Considering the number of enemies he seems to have made at the Neapolitan court no one can be astonished at this charge being brought against him. No accusation could have been more serious. On a similar charge Great Britain only a few decades earlier had tried and condemned to death a distinguished admiral. From so uncivilised a power as Naples then was La Trémoille could expect no better treatment.

The circulation of so terrible a report filled the Duke's relatives with horror. His only surviving brother,

Prince Louis de La Trémoille, was then living with Countess Bentinck at Hamburg. And in a letter to her grand-daughter in London the Countess writes [1]:

"We have had a very unpleasant time here the last three or four weeks. . . . The Italian newspapers, copied by those of the Empire, told us cruel, humiliating news of the Duc de La Trémoille, Prince de Tarente . . . whose brother, Prince Louis de La Trémoille, was, and still is, staying with me. The Duke is a general in the King of Naples' service, and was commanding the advance guard at the Battle of Calvi.[2] The papers said that the chief cause of the loss of this decisive battle was the treachery and cowardice of the Duke. You can imagine that this was enough to strike us to the soul with horror. Two brothers [3] have already died like heroes in God's cause and the King's, and the one who is here has sacrificed himself for the last seven or eight years, and has given up such small means as were left him, has lost his health and has risked his life at least twenty times. He was absolutely petrified with horror. In fact, I heard he would not be able to survive the frightful idea of seeing the head of his house covered with shame."

Later in this same letter, the Countess relates how the cloud of their sorrow lifted in an unexpected manner.

"In spite of the enormous difficulty," she continued, "which the court of Vienna itself experiences in obtaining news from those Italian places, we were so fortunate as to receive two letters (one from a general officer of first rank and in the same service) which not only completely efface

[1] On February 19th, 1799. The original letter is in the possession of Mr. Aldenburg Bentinck at Indio, in Devonshire. It is quoted by Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond in her "Life of Sophie, Countess Bentinck," II., 210—211.

[2] Presumably the same as Civita Castellana.

[3] Antoine Philippe, Prince de Talmond, condemned to death by the revolutionary court-martial and executed. Charles Auguste, Dean of Strasbourg, guillotined at Paris.

that black calumny, but tell us that, far from being wanting in courage and fidelity to his sovereign and benefactor, the Duke de La Trémoille in resisting those traitors who wished to give themselves up to the French did everything that the greatest zeal and valour could inspire, and nearly fell a victim himself, but escaped as by a miracle from the rage of those regiments who had been corrupted and seduced by the French. Neither he nor his colleague, the brave Chevalier de Saxe, could avoid their malicious and infernal slanders, the falsehood of which is now publicly proclaimed, and the King, his master, is informed of and touched by his fidelity, his innocence and his misfortune. We were transported with joy at the news, which gave new life to our amiable young Prince, who has made himself loved and esteemed by everyone and whose state was pitiable. I entreat you to tell all this to the Duke of Portland ; the Prince also urgently desires it, considering his esteem one of the greatest treasures in the world and knowing his brother's honour safe in the eyes of the majority when the Duke himself pronounces it to be above reproach."

Unhappily, this rejoicing was premature. The evil reports continued ; and five months after she wrote this letter, the Countess enters in her diary : " The Prince de La Trémoille left to-day, having given me terrible news last night at midnight." [1]

The " terrible news " to which the Countess referred concerned doubtless the doings of the Duke since the first appearance of that fatal slander. In a furious letter to Acton, in which he wrote that to be a private soldier in La Vendée was better than being general under such a minister, he resigned his commission. Then, dismissing his aide-de-camp and his servants, accompanied only by one Hungarian soldier, he left Rome, and by way of

[1] On July 4th, 1799. See Mrs. Aubrey de Blond, *op. cit.* II., 233.

Orbitello went to Florence. There his cousin, the Marquise de Grollier, and an old friend, the Bailli de Crussol, a former captain under the Comte d'Artois, afraid to receive one labouring under so terrible an accusation, sent him to the Vanini inn, where he was betrayed into the hands of the Neapolitan Minister, who had him arrested.

After a brief confinement in the citadel of Leghorn, La Trémoille was taken to Palermo, whither the Neapolitan court had fled from the Revolution in Naples. In Sicily, writes the Duke in his Souvenirs, the King and Queen were inclined to be indulgent and to recommend him to the court of Denmark. But the malice of the "atrabilious satrap" still pursued him. The only condition on which Acton would liberate him was that he should make good his bravado and become a soldier in La Vendée. With this object the Duke was permitted to embark at Trieste, from which port he travelled to Hamburg, *en route* for England, whence he was to cross the Channel into Normandy. At Hamburg La Trémoille met his brother Louis, who arranged his passage to England in company with General Frotté, who was likewise on his way to Normandy. Prince Louis, although convinced of his brother's innocence, had no belief in his judgment. He was always dreading that the Duke would perpetrate some new folly. To the life his eldest brother had previously led in England Louis referred as to a time when he "was completely crazy, with his diamonds, and his swords and his fatal dreams, when it was a pity for his reputation and his own good that England had no *lettres de cachet* or *petites maisons*."

Now at length the Duke's misfortunes seem to have sobered him. And the rest of his life was comparatively uneventful. After two months' guerilla warfare in

Normandy, during which his only adventure was to receive several musket shots in his clothes, he left the west when Buonaparte was attempting its pacification and went to Paris. There for two years he remained hiding in the house of a Swiss friend. Then, in 1803, as major-general he entered the service of the Grand Duke of Baden.

Among Prince Louis' correspondence has been discovered an anonymous document, but apparently written by a Neapolitan officer, confessing that the Duke had been treated with gross injustice. "We annoyed him in every possible way," it runs, "because we were shocked to see a foreigner colonel of a regiment in which the first families in the kingdom in vain solicited a sub-lieutenancy." Then testifying to the Duke's charm of manner, the writer continues: "But he vanquished us by his personality. He proved to us that he knew more than we did, and we would now always gladly serve under his orders."

Louis de La Trémoille, hoping that the Countess would make him her heir, continued at Hamburg until her death in 1801. But, although for years he had practically ruled her household, he had been unable to ingratiate himself sufficiently for her to bequeath him her property. "Her arrogance was inconceivable, her disposition of iron, and her heart of stone," wrote the Duke, and at her death his brother found himself homeless and with "nothing more than the emigrant's little bundle," with which he had arrived. Then he went to Paris in search of a rich wife, and in 1803 married Geneviève Adelaide, Comtesse de Langeron.

There for a time we must leave him in order to trace the more tragic career of his twin brothers, the Prince de

Talmond and the Abbé de La Trémoille. The Prince we left in England, whither in the autumn of 1792 he had conducted his sister-in-law, the Princesse de Tarente, after her miraculous escape from the September massacres. After establishing Madame de Tarente at Richmond, Talmond probably spent the winter in this country; for, while the royalist armies were in winter quarters, he could best serve their cause by endeavouring to procure from our government help for the royalist rising in Western France.

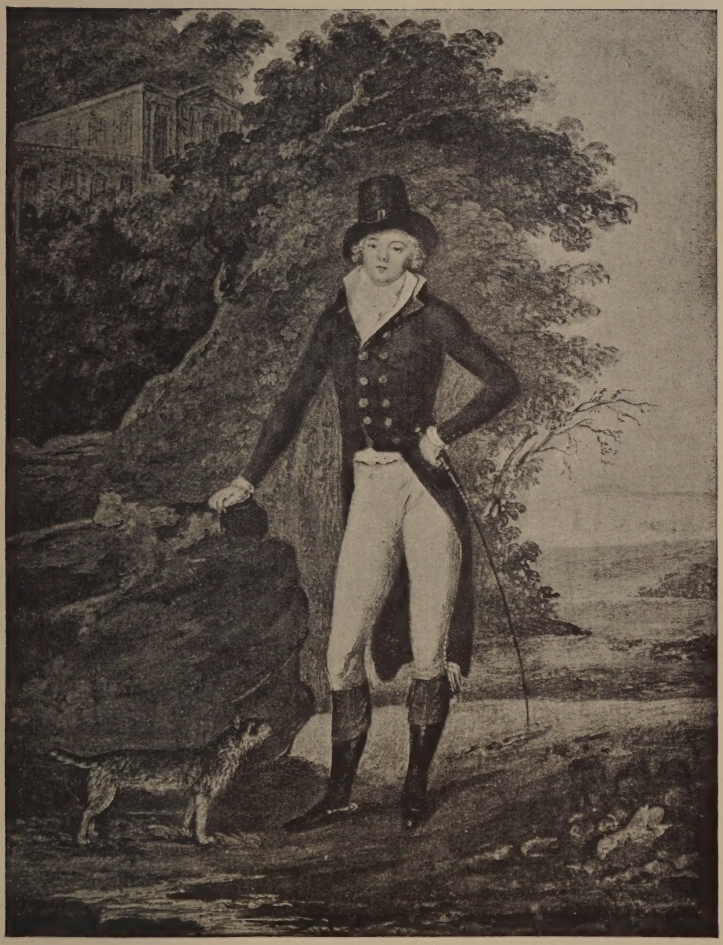
Moreover, during his visit to England in the spring, Talmond's possession of a wife and son in France had not prevented him from following his eldest brother's example and falling a victim to the charms of an English gentlewoman. Her name is usually not mentioned. One authority[1] only refers to Talmond's mysterious mistress as "Lady Brighton."

It was doubtless in January, 1793, that news of his King's execution tore the Prince from the pursuit of pleasure to fight for the cause in which he was to perish. The parting of the lovers was sad and solemn. In the true romantic manner they broke a ring in two halves, and, each taking one, exchanged a promise that whenever either sent the other a fragment of this ring the receiver should take it as a peremptory summons to the sender's presence.

Then Talmond, quitting our shores for ever, passed secretly over to France and in disguise appeared on his hereditary dominions in Maine.

But to effectively disguise himself was difficult for this handsome, striking, well-built Prince of twenty-five. He was soon recognised and imprisoned at Angers. His captors intended to take him to Paris for trial. But their

[1] Crétineau Joly, "Histoire des Généraux et Chefs Vendéens" (1838), 225, who describes Lady Brighton as Talmond's *fiancée*.



ANTOINE PHILIPPE PRINCE DE TALMOND

delay in the accomplishment of this design permitted the Abbé de La Trémoille, who was in the capital, to intercede with the Convention on his twin brother's behalf. All that the Abbé could obtain, however, was a promise of the Prince's liberation in exchange for an undertaking to leave Western France. Of such a desertion Talmond was incapable. Consequently he remained a prisoner. And orders were given for his conveyance from Angers to Laval. On the road, by bribing his guards, Talmond contrived to escape and to make his way into La Vendée, to Châtillon, where a royalist council was then sitting.

The commander of the royalist forces, La Rouerie, had recently died; and possibly Talmond may have hoped to succeed him. But, although his good looks and his brave, generous and genial disposition won him popularity with the rank and file, the nobles commanding in the royalist army regarded him with jealousy and suspicion. These gentlemen, many of them, had been among the 1,700 vassals who during *l'ancien régime* had owed allegiance to the Dukes of La Trémoille. And now they hesitated to take any step which might tend to restore the dominance of that family in Western France. It was impossible, however, to avoid giving Talmond some command. And the son of an Angevin cobbler who had just been appointed general of cavalry resigned in favour of the Prince, in whose regiment he consented to serve as a lieutenant.

Henceforth, whenever the hereditary gout permitted him to go into action, Talmond distinguished himself by dashing courage and unflinching fortitude. More than once his invincible ardour converted what would have been a disastrous defeat into a glorious victory.

Yet all the heroism of the royalist troops was powerless

against the able commanders and the revolutionary zeal of the *Sans-culottes*. Defeat followed defeat, while La Vendée was wasted with fire and sword, and the houses of the loyal peasants burnt to ashes. Their occupants, homeless wanderers, whom no hardships could alienate from their devotion to the Crown, with their old men, their women and their children, attached themselves to the army for protection and followed it in its march.

In a once fertile country transformed by hostile armies into a veritable desert, to feed this swelling multitude became increasingly difficult. And certain of the generals, among whom Talmond was one, proposed that the army with its throng of dependants should cross the Loire, into the less wasted province of Maine, where it was hoped a more effectual resistance might be organised.

On this question there was a heated debate in the council of war. Talmond, impetuous, sanguine and totally lacking in sound judgment, eagerly supported the proposal to cross into Maine, where in his ancestral dominions of Laval he expected to do great things for the royal cause. The general in chief, the Comte de La Rochejaquelein,[1] on the other hand, strongly opposed this project. Not only did it involve the abandonment of La Vendée to the Revolutionaries, but it entailed the enormously difficult enterprise of conveying across a broad river a whole army encumbered by hundreds of wounded, by thousands of old men, women and children, and by cart-loads of such household goods as they had succeeded in rescuing from the hands of the spoiler. In the council of war, however, La Rochejaquelein was outvoted. The passage was resolved upon,

[1] Two La Rochejaquelein brothers distinguished themselves in the La Vendée wars: the Comte Henri, who, after Lescure's death, was elected Commander-in-chief, and the Marquis Louis, who held a subordinate command.

and to Talmond was confided the task of procuring means of transport.

To provide sufficient boats for so vast a multitude was naturally impossible. Utter confusion reigned, panic prevailed, and the crossing of the river was a veritable *sauve qui peut*. Madame de La Rochejaquelein, who, with her dying husband, the wounded M. de Lescure,[1] was following the army, having watched the crossing from a hill near the river, has thus graphically described it in her Memoirs[2]:

"The heights of St. Florent form a kind of semi-circle, from the foot of which a great level plain stretches down to the Loire, which is very wide at this place. Eighty thousand people crowded into this valley: soldiers, women, children, old men and wounded, all pell-mell, fleeing from fire and murder. Behind them they could see the smoke of their villages which the Republicans were burning. Nothing was to be heard save groans, cries and sobs. In this confused mass everyone was trying to find his relatives, his friends, his defenders. An unknown destiny awaited these people on the opposite bank. Nevertheless they were as eager to reach it as if they were certain of finding there the end of all their sorrows. A score of old leaky boats were incessantly crossing the river bearing crowds of fugitives to the opposite bank. Others tried to cross on horseback, while those left behind stretched out their arms to their comrades already landed, entreating them to come to their rescue. Far away on the other side of the river one could dimly discern and faintly hear another great multitude. A little island in the middle was covered with people. Many of us compared all this disorder and despair, this terrible uncertainty as to the future, this surging crowd, this valley with a river to cross, to the pictures of the terrible Day of Judgment."

[1] She married Louis Marquis de La Rochejaquelein after the death of Lescure, which took place soon after the crossing of the Loire.

[2] Ed. 1822, 248.

In a boat, rowed by a poor priest who was worn out with eight hours at the oar, Madame de La Rochejaquelein and her friends were taken across. When they landed, there on the bank, seated on the grass, were crowds of Vendeans waiting for their friends to come over.

That the whole army with its vast throng of followers was eventually conveyed over the river speaks well for the Prince de Talmond's organisation. Once on the opposite bank, again at Talmond's suggestion, the Vendeans marched towards Laval. The town was held by the Republicans. But the Prince was confident of being able to capture it and to raise the country.

This march of the Vendean host was a marvellous sight. The vanguard of soldiers with a few cannon was followed by a disorderly crowd, women carrying their infants, old men supported by their sons, wounded barely able to drag themselves along, and with them artillery and carts and baggage wagons all mingled together and blocking the road so that sometimes it was impossible to advance. After halting for a few hours at Château Gonthier, the Vendeans approached Laval, where the first of Talmond's anticipations was fulfilled, for the 15,000 Republican defenders of the town fled before the royalist advance. But in the second of his calculations the Prince was disappointed: the surrounding country did not, as he had expected, take up arms for the royal cause. Only a few thousand peasants came in, young men from remote Breton villages, looking like savages with their long hair and goat-skin coats, as, waving sticks from which floated white handkerchiefs, they entered the town crying *vive le roi!*

During the nine days that the Vendeans stayed at Laval more than one Republican attack was successfully

repulsed ; and in these actions, which inflicted great loss on the enemy, Talmond was one of those who most brilliantly distinguished himself.

Meanwhile, however, serious dissensions had broken out among the generals ; the royalist commanders held conflicting opinions as to their next move. Some were for returning across the Loire, others for attacking Nantes. Talmond, feeling sure of Brittany, proposed the wildly impracticable project of a march on Paris. This suggestion was wisely combatted by M. de La Rochejaquelein, who urged that these western peasants would never be persuaded to go so far from home, and that with winter approaching—it was then the beginning of November—the march across France of so heterogeneous a multitude would inevitably be attended with disaster.

Eventually, when on November 2nd, the Vendeans left Laval, the next object of their attack was uncertain. They marched, however, in a north-westerly direction and made their first important halt at Fougères, that Breton town which three centuries earlier the Great Louis de La Trémoille had captured from turbulent nobles in rebellion against the King.[1]

At Fougères the royalist generals came to an understanding. Ever since the winter of 1792, when the nobles of the west had first formed a league for the support of the monarchy, they had been imploring help from England. It was to enforce this demand that in the following spring the Prince de Talmond had first visited England. Nothing very definite had been promised, but the French royalists lived in hope ; and now it was resolved to lead the Vendeans down to the sea shore, there to capture some port which might serve as a basis of communication with

[1] See *ante*, 60.

England, and as a dwelling-place for those thousands of women and children who encumbered the army. The port decided upon was Granville, on the Breton coast, not far from St. Malo.

By way of Dol and Avranches the Vendeans proceeded. At Avranches all the non-combatants were left behind, while the army, some 30,000 strong, continued to Granville. There, although at first the enthusiasm and valour of the besiegers won the day and carried the suburbs, finding that no adequate preparations had been made for an attack, the Vendeans were discouraged. The cannon on the ramparts drove them back, and although they continued before the town for thirty-six hours, they were ultimately forced to retreat and return to Avranches.

On the night before the attack on Granville a romantic incident had happened to the Prince de Talmond. It will be remembered that on the eve of his final departure from England, the Prince had broken a ring and exchanged a solemn promise with a mysterious lady. On this night, there was brought to him at Avranches in a sealed packet, presented by two English sailors, the lady's half of the ring with a reminder of his promise and an announcement that an English ship lay off the Breton coast ready to convey the Prince to England. Talmond was on the horns of a dilemma. To at once keep faith with his lady and his King was impossible, to one or the other he must break his word: he chose to prove false to the lady; and in prophetic words he wrote to her: "I have promised to defend the cause in which I have drawn my sword. I believe it to be right. To forsake my comrades-in-arms would be to break my word. Till death I shall share their labours and their dangers." While refusing to himself embark on the English vessel, Talmond determined to

send on board three ladies who were with the army and who were anxious to reach Jersey. Two of them, Madame de Cuissard and Madame de Fay, were wives of emigrants, but it was for the safety of the third, Mdlle. Sidonie, Madame de Fay's fascinating sister-in-law, that Talmond was most concerned. Indeed, we suspect that Mdlle. Sidonie's attractions, in obscuring those of her English predecessor, had considerably facilitated the Prince's choice between loyalty to his King and faithfulness to his mistress.

Before the Prince could carry out his project, however, the attack on Granville intervened, and it was not until the night after Granville that Talmond and his fair friends could set out for the coast. Shortly before daybreak, they left Avranches accompanied by another officer, ten horsemen and a priest. But on arriving at the seaside they found that, owing to the lowness of the tide, the English ship could not put into shore, and that in order to embark it would be necessary for the ladies to ride some distance on horseback through the water.

This they were afraid to do; and, hearing of the approach of Republican soldiers the party turned round forthwith and rode back to Avranches, having been absent no longer than three hours.[1]

But, during that short time, much had happened. An ex-gamekeeper, Stofflet, who commanded the Angevin and Poitevin part of the army, informed of Talmond's mysterious disappearance, rushed to the conclusion that

[1] Mme de La Rochejaquelein's "Mémoires," *ed. cit.*, 301—303; Crétineau Joly, "Histoire des Généraux et Chefs Vendéens" (1838), 225—6; the latter royalist, Catholic and inclined to favour Talmond. Other authorities (see Chassin, "La Vendée Patriote," III., 311, and note) state that Talmond intended to desert the army, that he offered a fisherman 100 louis-d'or and two of his best horses to carry him to Jersey, and that his brother officer, Beauvolliers, took with him the royalist war-chest.

he had deserted ; immediately he despatched a body of troops to bring him back, and seized the horses and all the other possessions which the Prince had left at Avranches. When Talmond returned, without even having met the soldiers sent in his pursuit, he was naturally furious to find that so slanderous an interpretation had been put upon his absence. Nevertheless he magnanimously forgave Stofflet, realising, doubtless, that it was defeat and disappointment that had rendered the general so absurdly suspicious.

Indeed the desperate straits to which their failure to take Granville had reduced the royalist leaders were enough to account for any error in judgment. The generals were at their wit's end to know what to do with these thousands of poor ruined folk whom they had led far from their native province, in the hope of finding some new home north of the Loire. The Vendeans themselves were clamouring to be conducted back across the river ; and the generals, at the end of their own resources, resolved to accede to this demand.

During the month which elapsed between the defeat of Granville on November 14th, and the arrival of the Vendeans at the Loire on December 15th, the two principal events were the battles of Dol and Le Mans, in both of which Talmond played a prominent part.

Their sorrowful retreat southwards the Vendeans suspended for a few days in order to rest in the little town of Dol. There at midnight they were attacked by a formidable republican force and at first utterly routed. As day dawned, however, the Prince de Talmond was able to turn what threatened to be a crushing defeat into a complete victory. All through those hours of desperate fighting in the darkness, through the panic and confusion in

the narrow streets of Dol, away to the right of their main body the Vendeans had heard continuous firing. This proceeded from a cannon which the Prince de Talmond was discharging. The gunners having abandoned it, the Prince and two brother officers themselves served it steadily all through the night. Luckily the morning mist which came up at daybreak enabled Talmond to deceive the enemy as to the strength of his forces. In reality, he had no more than 400 men; but, inspired by their leader's valour, these 400 made such gallant stand that their fleeing comrades, inspired by their resistance, rallied; and through Talmond's courage the tide of battle turned.

"This battle did great credit to M. de Talmond. M. de La Rochejaquelein and all the army delighted to assure Talmond repeatedly that we owed him our salvation," writes Madame de La Rochejaquelein in her Memoirs, and she was no friend to the Prince.[1]

But at Le Mans, Talmond's heroism, though again signally displayed, was powerless to avert the Vendean defeat before the walls of that town.

Then followed an unsuccessful attempt to recross the Loire, and the separation of the commander-in-chief from his army. La Rochejaquelein, having crossed to the southern bank in order to take possession of some boats, was attacked by the *Sans-Culottes*, and compelled to take refuge in the woods.

After this disaster the Vendean forces began to break up. Those who were able returned singly or in groups to their homes across the river. Of the troops that remained together, after the loss of La Rochejaquelein, it was necessary to elect a commander. The Prince de Talmond

[1] P. 317.

expected to be chosen. And when he found himself passed over for a mere country gentleman, he resolved to leave the Vendean army in order to raise a force of his own.

Despite past disappointments, his hopes still centred in Laval. And he was making his way thither, when he fell in with a party of Republicans, who took him prisoner. There was nothing to indicate the prisoner's rank, and the Prince would probably have been liberated had not the daughter of an innkeeper, whom Talmond had assisted during the crossing of the Loire, recognised him, and cried, "Why, it is the Prince de Talmond!"

Taken before the Republican general, Beaufort, the Prince proudly acknowledged his identity. "Yes," he said, "I am the Prince de Talmond. Sixty-eight battles in six months fought against the Republic have made me familiar with death. A La Trémoille, son of the lords of Laval and Vitré, myself a Prince, I was bound to serve my King. By knowing how to die, I shall prove that I was worthy to defend the throne."

The *Sans-Culottes* were highly elated by their capture of this "sovereign of Maine and Normandy," as they described Talmond, this "Capet of the brigands, worthy to figure on the same stage as his dead *confrère*."

Pending the decision as to the place of his trial and execution, the Prince was imprisoned at Rennes. The winter dampness and cold of his Breton prison, intensifying the twinges of hereditary gout, reduced this brave soldier, who had never flinched before danger in the field or hardship on the march, to appeal to the pity of his captors. To the Republican general, Rossignol, Talmond wrote from Rennes the following pathetic, but dignified, letter[1]: "Citizen General, the enemy whom fate has

[1] See "Chartier de Thouars," 378.

delivered into your hands appeals to your justice and humanity to deal with him a little less rudely than to confine him where he is at present, in a room without a fire, where he is dying of cold and damp. Whenever he wishes to procure anything for himself, he is met with a refusal which he is told is the General's order. He finds it hard to believe that such orders come from you, and that after having fought against him bravely and loyally, you can take pleasure in thus torturing him in his last moments. This very day he has been refused fish, in the fear, apparently, that he might endeavour to choke himself. Be assured, General, that such a design is far from entering his head, and that, after having so often braved death, he knows how to await it with perfect composure. Be assured also that he will not try to escape, and that in this respect you may place more reliance on his brigand's word than on all the sentinels in the world. Be so kind therefore as to order him a fire and such food as he can eat and you may always count on the gratitude of one, who, after being your enemy, hopes, at least, to merit your esteem."

During his cross-examination by the Republican general, Rossignol, at Rennes, Talmond was questioned as to his communications with England. His replies were so characteristic of his brave loyalty to the cause for which he was about to die, that they demand full quotation here :

" Did you not," asked General Rossignol, the President of the court, " carry on a correspondence with England, who promised, at some time not specified, to send you men, victuals and ammunition and especially to collaborate with you in an attack on Granville ? "

Talmond. " Yes."

Rossignol. "Then why did this attack fail?"

Talmond. "Reports dishonouring certain of the leaders had been circulated in the royal army, which on that account failed to charge with its accustomed ardour. Moreover the English broke their word and physical and local causes prevented them from disembarking." [1]

Rossignol. "If England broke her word to you then you must owe her ministers a grudge, and being quit of any obligation to them, there can be no reason why, before you die, you should not serve your country by revealing the plots laid against her."

Talmond. "I am resolved to go to the grave bearing with me the esteem of all parties. You cannot have hoped that I should dishonour myself by such baseness. Whether they were friendly or hostile, we and the foreign powers served the same cause."

A Poitevin *emigré*, who met Madame de Tarente in England, spoke truly when he said that her brother-in-law had replied to his accusers like a god. That same noble loyalty, high courage, and proud dignity which inspired these words the Prince de Talmond displayed to the end.

Meanwhile the unhealthy condition of the Rennes prison had caused the outbreak of an epidemic, to which Talmond, exhausted by cold, hunger and illness rapidly succumbed. It was because the serious state of his health threatened to deprive them of their victim, that the Revolution authorities, denying the Prince's request to be tried at Paris, hurried him before the Revolution court-martial at Vitré.

On the way thither the Prince became so ill that he was thought to be dying. At his trial the acute sore throat, which was one of the worst symptoms of the Rennes epidemic, hardly left him any voice with which to reply to

[1] This answer is vague, but thus is it reproduced by Chassin in "La Vendée Patriote, III.," 545.

his accusers. But such words as he was able to utter were bravely spoken. To the charge of treason Talmond replied: "Only if I had done otherwise than I have should I have deserved to be called a traitor."

From the moment of his arrest the Prince must have known that he was foredoomed. The Vitré court condemned him, "as one of the infernal horde of the brigands of La Vendée," to suffer the confiscation of all his property by the state, if that had not already been done, and to be delivered into the hands of the "Avenger of the People" —for with this proud title they styled the executioner— within four hours to be put to death on the public square of Laval.

The brevity of the interval between the pronouncement of the sentence and its execution was due, no doubt, to the judge's fear lest a natural death should rob them of their valuable victim and avert so striking an example of popular vengeance as the capital punishment of this great noble in the very heart of his own domains.

It was on January 27th, three weeks after his arrest, that Talmond was conveyed to Laval, that town which he had so sanguinely hoped to make the centre of a royalist revival.

On the way the miserable horses, commandeered by the *Sans-Culottes* to draw their prisoner's conveyance, broke down; and the condemned Prince must needs wait by the roadside until others had been procured.

Arrived at the place of execution, the "Avenger of the People" seemed to hesitate to exact retribution from his princely prey. Whereupon Talmond adjured him not to delay, saying, "I have done my duty, now it is for you to do yours."

The Prince, by his wife Henriette d'Argouges, left one son, Léopold, a boy of seven, who at the time of his father's death was with his mother in Switzerland.

When he grew up Prince Léopold was forced to serve in Napoleon's army, and by his display of hereditary courage won the Emperor's praise in the Russian campaign. In 1814, the Prince de Talmond joined his King, Louis XVIII., in London. Thence, having been appointed colonel of a French regiment of dragoons, he returned with his sovereign to Paris. A year later, on November 7th, 1815, he died. Léopold, in 1812, had married Félicie de Durfort Duras, by whom he had no children.

Prince Antoine's widow, Henriette d'Argouges, in 1819, married Auguste de La Rochejaquelein, younger brother of the famous La Vendée general.

Six months after his twin brother's execution, the Abbé de La Trémoille, in a similar manner, suffered death at Paris.[1]

The story of his accusation and trial in the Salle de l'Egalité of the Palais de Justice, by the Revolution Tribunal, throws a strong light on the proceedings of the Revolutionists during those last days of the Reign of Terror. That was a time when no proofs of the guilt of the accused were demanded. "There never are any proofs," says the leader of the jury in "Les Dieux ont Soif."[2] In those days men judged with the heart not with the reason, and they always condemned; for their hearts told them that it was only by the removal of every possible enemy that the Republic could endure.

Thus it came about that the Abbé de La Trémoille and

[1] On June 15th, 1794.
[2] Anatole France, 1911.

forty other accused, all completely unknown to one another, were thunderstruck to find themselves hurried before the Revolution Tribunal, and embraced in the common charge of conspiring the death of Robespierre. It was not these innocent royalists, but the Republicans themselves who, but a month later, were to plot the tyrant's death. Had only La Trémoille's trial been postponed a few weeks, he with hundreds of other prisoners might have profited from the Incorruptible's sudden execution.

At the Abbé's trial no attempt whatever was made to establish the formal charge under which he laboured. The cross-examination turned chiefly on the intercourse between La Trémoille and his late brother Talmond, when the latter was passing through Paris on his way to La Vendée.[1]

"You did not speak the truth when you said you had only once seen your brother."

"I don't pretend to say I only saw him once," was the reply. "I saw him five or six times at the Opera; and then I told him he was a great fool and that he would be arrested."

It was not however on the charge of complicity with his brother, but with these forty persons, none of whom he had ever seen before, that the Abbé was condemned and hurried to the scaffold, where he perished beneath the guillotine on June 15th, 1794.

In the following year Prince Louis de La Trémoille took his brother's place in La Vendée, and for a while served under the Comte de Puisaye.

After the Quiberon disaster, La Trémoille strongly advocated peace and helped to negotiate it. Prince

[1] See Wallon, "Histoire du Tribunal Revolutionnaire de Paris," ed., 1881, IV., 198—200.

Louis' campaign in La Vendée followed by the Duke's three months' service there in 1798 closed for a while the La Trémoilles' participation in the warfare of the Revolution period. Louis continued to act as the trusted agent of Louis XVIII., both in Paris and other European cities. During the Hundred Days he was sent to the west of France to see if he could raise that region against Napoleon. But his efforts met with complete failure, and he was glad to accept from Napoleon's general, Foy, a passport into England.

On the restoration of the monarchy after Waterloo, the La Trémoilles were reinstated in all the honours and emoluments which their ancestors had enjoyed.

Prince Louis' first wife, the Countess of Langeron, having died, he married, in 1834, Augusta Murray, Countess of Dunmore. Three years later he died at Aix-la-Chapelle. Though the least interesting, he was probably the most level-headed of the four brothers.

Meanwhile, the head of the house likewise had been twice a widower ; Emmannuelle de Chatillon, as we have seen, died at St. Petersburg in 1814 ; three years after, the Duke married Marie Virginie, Comtesse de Saint-Didier, who, after having borne him two daughters,[1] died in 1829 ; in the following year La Trémoille took to himself a third wife, Joséphine-Eugenie-Valentine Walsh, Comtesse de Serrant.

The Comtesse de Serrant, who belonged to the famous Irish Jacobite family of Walsh, was a great heiress. Through her marriage with the Duke there came into the possession of the La Trémoilles the magnificent château of Serrant, near Angers, which is at present the favourite family abode. The Comtesse de Serrant was the mother

[1] One became Princesse de Salm, the other Baroness of Wykerslooth.

THE CHÂTEAU OF SERRANT, RESIDENCE OF THE PRESENT DUC DE LA TRÉMOILLE

of the late Duke, who, besides his invaluable publication of La Trémoille documents, has written two records of his mother's family.[1]

And here we must leave Charles Bretagne de La Trémoille. His varied adventures on the battlefield, in a Neapolitan dungeon, on the turf, at the gaming table, in the ball room, and in the alcove are at an end. At six and sixty, he is *rangé*, and about to settle down to domestic felicity.

" There are two births ; "

sang William Cartwright in his verses " To Chloe,"

" the one when light
First strikes the new awaken'd sense ;
The other when two souls unite,
And we must count our life from thence :
When you loved me and I loved you
Then both of us were born anew."

In such ardent words, had the Duc de La Trémoille been a poet, he might have sung of his marriage with Valentine de Serrant ; for even the prose of his " Recollections " glows with the passion inspired by this attractive lady, to the happiness of his union with whom the Duke, in his " Recollections," has consecrated a rapturous paragraph. It forms a fitting close to the story of his chequered career. It may also afford a not inappropriate conclusion to the history of his famous house.

Referring to the uneventfulness of his later life, the Duke writes :

" One day alone stands out in my memory, September 14th, 1830, when to the friendship of poor

[1] One, translated into English under the title of " A Royal Family, Irish and French, and Prince Charles Edward," (1904), and another, " Mon Grand-père, (Philippe François Walsh) à la cour de Louis XV. et à celle de Louis XVI." (1904).

Archambauld de Talleyrand Périgord, I owed the hand of Mdlle. Valentine de Serrant, that ravishing and angelic being to whom I am indebted for so much happiness. Here I must close, being incapable of adequately depicting that angel of goodness whom I shall adore until I draw my last breath."

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